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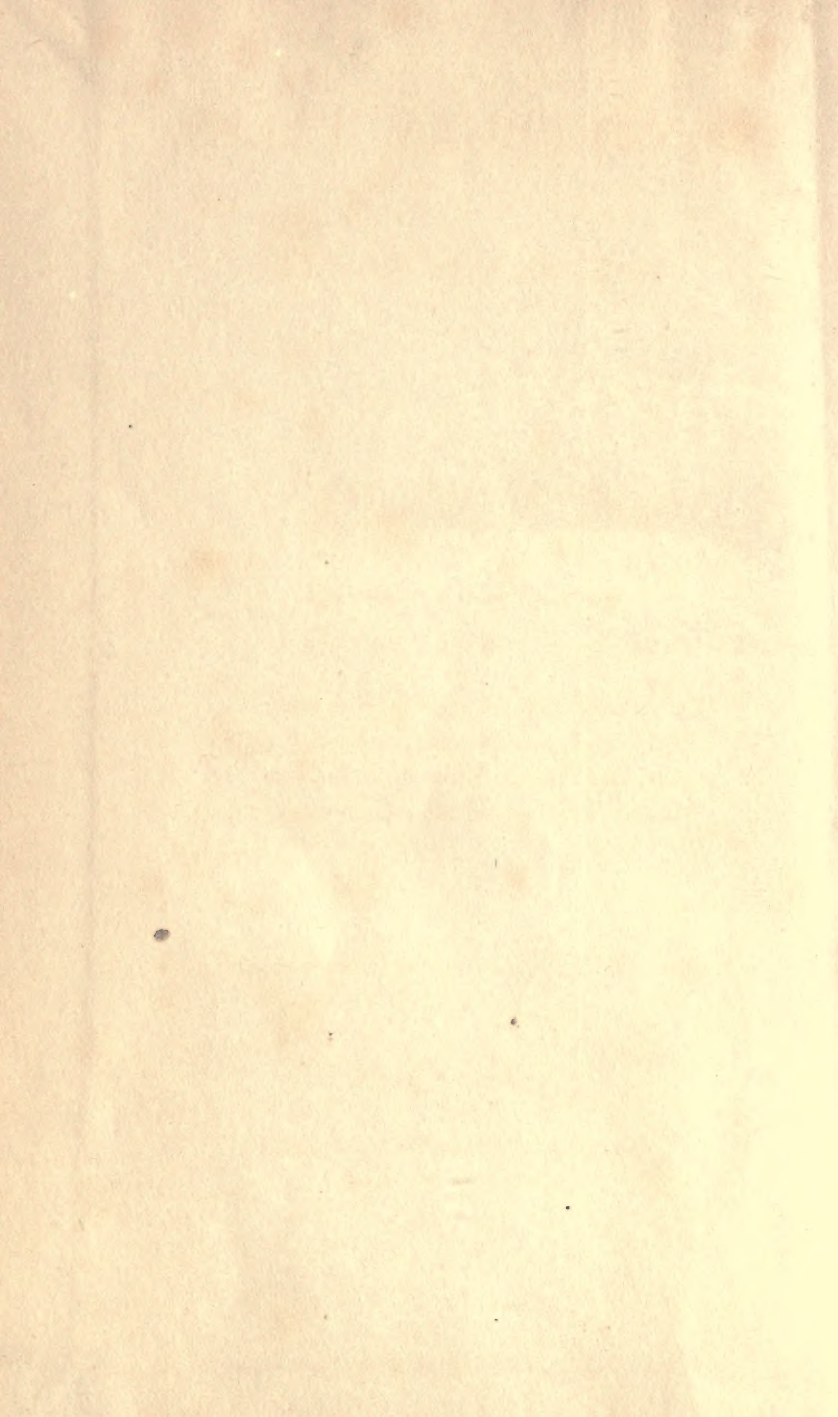








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# CANTERBURY TALES.

## VOLUME THE FOURTH.

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*BY HARRIET LEE.*

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On trembling wings let vagrant Fancy soar,  
Nor always haunt the sunny realms of joy;  
But now and then the shades of life explore,  
Though many a sound and sight of woe annoy.

BEATTIE.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR G. AND J. ROBINSON,  
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

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MDCCCL.



CANTERBURY TALES.

VOLUME THE FOURTH.

London:

МОЯ ПРЕДАТОЧКА

2552

## POET'S ADDRESS.

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“ IF you find my day-dreams as agreeable as I have done, we may henceforward recite Tales without going to Canterbury, and travel half the world over without quitting our own dear fire-fides.”—Such, courteous Reader, were the words with which we last parted\* ; and they were the words of truth. Should you be good-naturedly disposed, you will not inquire minutely where the travellers were picked up by whom the following stories are related ; but will continue to ramble on, with me, through the regions of imagination, without much anxiety as to the object of the journey, provided the road prove but pleasant.

\* *Vide* Volume the Third.



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\* A.D. 1780, the Third.



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THE  
GERMAN'S TALE.

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*KRUITZNER.*

—————What is't that takes from thee  
Thy comfort, pleasure, and thy golden sleep?  
Why dost thou bend thine eyes upon the earth,  
And start so often when thou sitt'st alone?  
Why hast thou lost the fresh blood in thy cheek?  
Oh! what portents are these?

SHAKESPEARE.

TOWARDS the end of the month of February, in a winter memorably severe, a man, his wife, and their son, a boy not seven years of age, arrived at M——, an obscure town on the northern frontier of Silesia, within the estates of the Count Prince de

T——. A fever that attacked the husband, together with an unexpected and heavy fall of snow, impeded all further advance towards Bohemia, their ostensible place of destination. The malady proved dangerous: and the resources of benevolence (for the travellers were suspected to be indigent) would have been soon exhausted in a petty German district, not abounding in religious foundations or opulent neighbours.

The town, though in itself extremely insignificant, had been raised to temporary consideration some years before by the residence of the Prince, who had chosen to pass on that spot the period of a political disgrace; and his departure had again reduced it to its original obscurity. The inhabitants of M—— might with great justice be divided exactly into two classes: the poor who *were* proud, and the poor who were not. The former dwelt in a small number  
of

of ill-built houses confusedly huddled together, and dignified with the title of a Bourg; where, under the claims of a sort of antiquated and worn-out nobility, they indulged in arrogance and sloth. The latter, who were distributed over a long, straggling, and half-ruined suburb, were mere bourgeois, with wants and ideas equally contracted to their situation: nor had the two classes any thing in common but that selfishness and inertness which is the general result of ignorance.

Frederick Kruitner, for so the stranger was called, and his unfortunate family, continued, therefore, to languish more than ten days, unnoticed by any body but their host; who so far concerned himself about their future fate, as, in the progress of that time, to have made up his account that the said Kruitner should not die in his house; for which reason he deemed it would be most



convenient speedily to remove him from it. For reasons, doubtless, however, more merciful and wise, Providence had decreed that Kruitzner should not at that critical period die at all: and though this conviction seemed to give but little satisfaction to any human beings, his wife and child excepted, it is probable that in the region of eternal blessedness which is to be occupied by minds, not bodies, the grateful and pious dilation of theirs would fill a larger circle in the sphere of existence than the souls of twenty—aye, a hundred—such beings as their host at M——: which hundred, indeed, stripped of their portly corporeal clothing, would, perhaps, have formed collectively so small a mass as might almost seem to demand the eye of Omniscience to discover any soul at all!

Be that as it may, Kruitzner, after having just looked, as it were, into the chasm  
which

which no ray, save that of Faith, ever yet penetrated, suddenly found the vital springs once more in motion. The severity of the season, however, was still such as to preclude the possibility of passing forward with safety: had it been even otherwise, Kruitznor, though recovering, was yet too weak to undertake a journey of such length: it was even suspected that his resources no longer permitted him to attempt it. Yet had he not hitherto appeared to be absolutely penilefs; and there was that in the countenance of Josephine, his wife, which announced a magnanimous confidence in the future rarely to be found in decided and habitual poverty. Josephine was, indeed, of a cast of woman not often seen. It would have been difficult to say she had perfect beauty, but she had looks that might have awed or won a world. They had indeed even actually won, to a certain degree of interest he was not accustomed to feel, the Intendant

for the Prince de T——; and as that quarter, or rather suburb, of the city in which his highness's palace stood contained several houses adjacent to it not tenanted, and indeed, from the long absence of the Prince, hardly tenantable, though they had once been splendidly filled, the Intendant, who was not unacquainted with the fears and wishes of Krutzner's host, had for some time revolved in his mind the magnificent project of permitting the invalid and his wife to shelter themselves under the roof of one of these: judiciously calculating that the tax of gratitude he should thereby impose would, most probably, be paid precisely in the manner he would himself desire: namely, by the death of one, and the life of the other; or if, contrary to probability, both should happen to live, he trusted to future contingencies to reward him in some way for this extraordinary act of bounty.



It could not be doubted but the overture was received with that sensibility it seemed to demand, and which the forlorn situation of the parties was calculated to inspire them with. On the evening of a very rainy day, therefore, the invalid and his family, constrained by hard necessity, and the cold countenance of their host, departed to take possession of their new, or rather old, habitation. The few ruined conduits that ran through the town poured black and muddy torrents into the river, and a pale streak of crimson on the horizon announced the setting sun, whose influence had suspended the storm; while, through the smoaky windows of those houses that had glass ones, the faces of their inmates were indistinctly seen, alternately drawn thither by the wheels of the Intendant's crazy calèche, under shelter of which he had graciously offered to convey Kruitznier to his new abode. With much satisfaction their host

saw

saw the family depart; not without receiving, from their small resources, a payment sufficiently scanty, indeed, though all they could bestow, in acknowledgment of his services. Josephine, with a heart relieved by the conveyance she had found for her husband, pensively followed him, holding her little son by the hand: some times wading with difficulty through the mire; at others, covered by the water which streamed from the eaves of the houses; and anxiously watching the calèche, as it jogged on at a pace not much quicker than her own.

It was among the advantages of their new accommodation that they had permission to fetch wood from the Prince's stores; and, perhaps, there is nobody who does not know the cheerfulness of a blazing fire. If any such persons there are, let them take a walk, like Josephine, through the moist atmosphere of a low, comfortless town;

town; and if, like her, they happen to sit down afterwards with a beloved husband and child round the social hearth, they will, probably, not envy the first monarch in Europe his courtiers, his lustres, or his carpets. Happiness! indefinable good!—perhaps best extracted from misery!—Ah, could we but keep thee!—Yet Josephine *did* keep thee—for the night at least: for she possessed certain materials in her own bosom to which thy precious ore, though not inseparable from, naturally adheres.—Not so Krutzner! *his* slumbers were disturbed both by sleeping and waking visions, to which, perhaps, the impression of external objects on the organs of sense as much contributed as the yet uncertain state of his health. For the first time, after a tedious confinement, he had that evening seen day-light and the sun. He had believed he should never see it more, and to his dim eye it had all the effect of a new object.

object. The breath of heaven, too, had blown upon his face; and recollections, long torpid under the heavy hand of sickness, were awakened in his heart. During the tedious vigils of the night, he surveyed with wondering and curious eyes the tarnished splendor of the bed and room into which he was thus strangely thrown; and though superstition peopled it not to him, as it might have done to those of his neighbours who knew the stories attached to it, that gloom which is haunted by "the ghosts of our departed joys" needs no other spectre to fill it.

In the solitude and obscurity of their spacious and comfortless mansion, days and days now past over the heads of Kruitznier and his wife. Deep snow, in the interim, capped the high mountains which separated them from Bohemia; floods inundated the country; cold chilled the human species;



cies; and it seemed as if the vital principle contracted hourly into a narrower circle, till the little town of M—— became the point at which it stopt. On those days when the sun broke through the cheerless atmosphere, Krutzner was occasionally seen turning up the ground in the garden for the few winter roots that afforded. It was observed that he was still pale, even to fallowness; that he had powerful features, a brow marked by sorrow, and an eye of no striking effect in his countenance, unless kindled up by some sudden emotion, when it darted forward a fire that seemed like new-created light upon the world. From his own habitation he never stirred; and, as that habitation was of no very good report in the neighbourhood, he was little troubled with visitors. Sometimes, indeed, the wife of the post-master condescended to look in upon Madame Krutzner, when the Intendant favoured her with a seat in his bone-

bone-setting conveyance. On such occasions the good lady, who had only three faults—pride, curiosity, and the love of talking,—feldom came without bringing to the little boy pots of conserves, sugar-cakes, and such other housewifely presents as cost nothing to the donor and gratify the appetites common to children. When this happened, she did not fail, however, to observe, though by stealth as it were, the keen air of famine with which the boy would devour her cates; accompanied sometimes with thin slices of bread, which his mother cut for him; while his father, who rarely spoke, would lean his elbows on his knees, and, covering his face with his hands, only now and then cast wild and eager glances upon his wife and child. These temporary starts of sensibility excepted, Kruitznor was sombre, abstracted, and frequently employed in writing. Yet to whom his letters were addressed

dressd remained a profound secret ;—the good lady, though she had not neglected to question her husband duly on the subject, not having been able to extort the smallest information from him. For though Weilburg, such was the name of the postmaster, was not excellent at keeping a secret, he was at least more discreet than to confide it to his wife. In this instance, however, his merit was small, since, in fact, there was, as far as letters were concerned, no secret to keep : Kruitznér's, if indeed he wrote any, never being known to reach the post-office.

Mr. Weilburg was, nevertheless, a man of no small importance in his department : he was believed to be rich ; his wife claimed a sort of remote and left-handed relationship to the Prince himself ; and had been even noticed before her marriage by a certain Countess who had formerly occupied



cupied the very house lately lent on sufferance to the Kruitznors. Of this Countess's strange things had been reported when she was alive, and strange things continued to be reported now that she was supposed to be dead. She was strongly surmised to have been the *chère amie* of his Highness; and, as fame related, had, in a fit of jealousy, destroyed herself, in one of those very apartments the Kruitznors then inhabited. Other reports, indeed, averred that, far from committing any such unchristian-like act, she had accompanied the Prince in his berlin on the road to Vienna; but as she certainly had not been seen to depart from her own roof, and as an air of mystery had been, perhaps, voluntarily thrown over the business, in order to save a half-ruined reputation, the whole disgrace had been judiciously transferred to that which could best bear it—namely, the house; which, to a certain degree, stood proscribed. That  
under

under such circumstances, Madame Weilburg should become a visitor there, seemed a little extraordinary: but it is possible that she had either strength of mind or authentic information enough to know the futility of these suspicions:—or, it may be presumed, that, having once tasted the pleasures of grandeur and luxury in that very house, and seeing in Josephine an extraordinary as well as fascinating character, both of form and mind, she did not think it improbable circumstances might bring back the days that were past.

To Mr. Weilburg the person only of Josephine was yet known; though he might almost have been said to have the hearts and heads of the whole little community of M—— in his possession; since his authority in the post-office made every thing that was interesting to either pass through his hands. Those who have been

present at the opening of the bags, and delivery of the letters, alone know what a scene of perturbation and anxiety such occasions present, even in peaceful days ; but in time of war, as was then the case, how many hands are stretched out, how many cheeks are flushed, how many hearts palpitate with hope, or sink with despondency ! The names of a son—a brother—a father—a husband—a lover—tremble, in imperfect and half-suppressed sounds, on the lips of the standers-by ; yet no decided one escapes : the strong convulsions of the mind most sensitively shrink from observation, and each retires into himself to devour the pang or the joy of the moment ! Even in the town of M——, isolated as it seemed in creation, a cipher, only swelling that great aggregate termed society, these feelings were confusedly understood ; and they frequently led to developements of circumstances or character, by which Weilburg knew



knew how to profit. Nothing of this, however, had yet occurred in the case of Madame Kruitzner. She had at first attracted his notice by a certain exterior of grandeur he was unable to comprehend. "This woman is nobody," said he to himself, whenever he saw her at a distance, in her snow shoes, her close pelisse lined with common skins, and her fur cap, marking her fine brow, and the correct outline of her features; while the little Marcellin at her side showed in his blooming countenance the exact miniature of hers;—"this woman can be nobody, who is thus able to encounter the severity of such a season! Yet what a step! what a walk! one should swear it was a coronation, instead of the business of a domestic, that she is engaged in!" Madame Kruitzner, meantime, wholly unconscious of the comments that were made on her, with sober and persevering equanimity always

attended the arrival of the courier, and always, hitherto, in vain. Now and then, indeed, she was observed to drop a tear when the child complained of cold or fatigue, which he never did till they were returning: for, by a sort of affectionate sympathy, the elastic step of the mother seemed to invigorate her young companion.

A certain confidential communication that passed at this juncture made the inquiries of Madame Kruitzner more accurately observed than before. To the two important characters of postmaster and intendant the town added a third, seldom omitted in any district however small; namely, a lawyer;—or rather one who called himself such: for the more honourable part of his fraternity would probably have alike disclaimed his pretensions and his practice. He was a busy, officious sort of personage, who knew almost every  
thing

thing better than law ; and exactly among that servile class of his profession who are employed to embroil a cause—an occupation which the dishonesty of their clients, not less than their own, renders, it is to be feared, full as profitable as the ending one. But though Mr. Idenstein (for such was his name) professed to live by his talents, those who knew him best were inclined to think it was by the exercise of one only—the talent of being useful.—It proved, however, in this case, as in many others, a host in itself ; for it made him always an acceptable guest at the only two good tables in town, the Intendant's and Weilburg's ; which, as he was needy, was an advantage he failed not to profit by. To the Intendant he particularly address himself, in the hope of obtaining his countenance, at some future period, towards a more extensive and advantageous establish-



ment than could be found at M——; where, although the spirit of litigation abounded, the body and sinews were wanting. The Intendant, on his side, was liberal of *promises*; for he had, in reality, no intention of parting with Idenstein: having himself, as he often declared, more occasion for law, (for he very judiciously seldom termed it justice) in the management of the Prince's concerns, than almost any man within the district. Idenstein's employment in Weilburg's house was of a lighter nature, and one better suited to his taste: for it chiefly consisted in retailing all the intrigues of the neighbourhood to his hostess; which, as he was not malicious, but only credulous and vain, he often did with some pleasantry, and without interruption from her husband—a fly, quiet, stagnant sort of character, more apt to listen than to talk; and one who thus, under  
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the appearance of a dull taciturnity, concealed a disposition no less frivolous and inquisitive than that of his wife.

Various inquiries, supposed to be set on foot by a great man, now directed the attention of this respectable trio to Kruitznier and his family. There was, indeed, no certainty, and, in some respects, little probability, of their being the objects of the inquiry; but idleness and curiosity had marked them out as such. The persons concerned in forwarding it were at least assured no ill consequence could result to themselves; nor was any one amongst them of a character to advert to the evil it might produce to others. Sly conjectures, crafty observations, together with a sort of petty activity, formed the habit of their minds; and this habit spontaneously directed itself to every thing where there was the smallest appearance of mystery. That of want is, alas!

too painful to the initiated not to bid them shrink with reluctance from the development. Kruitznier and his wife, lulled into temporary security, nevertheless believed they had, in their present condition, no other evil to contend with: nor had it hitherto occurred to them to suspect, that, while they were striving to snatch all the repose that poverty and sorrowful recollections would allow, the snare was secretly winding around that threatened finally to destroy it,

That repose, precarious as it thus was in its nature, was every day fading from their grasp, even while they were yet ignorant that any one was at hand to tear it from them. Their retreat at M——, which had in the first instance promised them little else than a grave, appeared, from the circumstances in which they were placed, to shut them out almost as completely from  
the

the rest of the world as if they had really been buried there. Stationed within that narrow limit, and devoid of the means either to advance or recede, they found themselves in the most frightful of all solitudes—that of the soul : and though there is a principle in nature, and a still stronger in love, which obliges us to rejoice, despite of past calamities, in the recovery of a being whom death alone seems capable of sheltering from future ones, yet did the faint pleasure of unexpected convalescence daily give way, even in both, to the most racking inquietude. The good genius of Josephine, for on her a good genius still attended, had, nevertheless, so far favoured them, that the only letter she had ever sent from M——, written immediately on her arrival there, and at the critical moment, as it seemed, of her husband's fate, had, by means of the obscurity in which she was then plunged, fortunately



nately escaped the cognisance of Weilburg ; who, except on occasions of interest or curiosity, seldom executed his employment in person. The mere superscription of that letter would have enlightened him more effectually than his own ingenuity, or even that of his assistants, ever succeeded in doing : but it had been carried to the office late at night by Josephine herself, thrown hastily into the bags, and the answer to it—the important, and anxiously expected answer—never arrived.

Sanguine as the parties concerned in the present scrutiny respecting Kruitznier and his wife might originally be, they had very soon opportunity to perceive that there was either little to discover, or that the discovery would not be easily made. The habitual reserve of his character had, from the first, afforded small hope of success : and in hers there was a generous plainness  
and

and candour that defeated, even without intending it, the little arts of a sophisticated and frivolous mind. It was in vain for Madame Weilburg to observe—"that the delicate hands of her new acquaintance were never fitted for those servile offices in which she was employed:" in vain did the good lady wonder, "that Madame Kruitznier had not profited by the kind dispositions of the Intendant, to solicit some appointments for her husband in the household of the Prince;" even her happy prognostics upon the promising countenance of Marcellin were thrown away. Josephine was little likely to be touched with the coarse flattery of one whose penetration into her condition or her character was so small: and though a grateful sense of some trifling obligations, together with a natural indulgence to the foibles of others, taught her, on these occasions, to practise an extraordinary self-command, it was not possible

fible for her always to disguise that restlessness and impatience which springs from an agitated heart.

During the first days of this intercourse the Intendant himself frequently made one of the party ; but he had just that sort of understanding which informed him he was of all men living least calculated to answer his own purpose of winding into confidence. He had gained possession of his situation soon after the Prince quitted M——: and having originally taken up all the shreds and patches of self-importance left there by his predecessor, he found it impossible to lay them down in that degree the haughty and repulsive manners of Kruitznor demanded : him, therefore, he soon most cordially hated : nor did the pleasure he really found in seeing Josephine indemnify him for the mortification his pride received in the society of her husband ;

band : he, consequently, discontinued his visits, or paid them very rarely, and at hours when he believed he should not encounter the latter ;—turning over all exercise of ingenuity that respected him to Idenstein, whose subtle and pliant manners eminently fitted him for the task.

Krutzner, though of a more complex character than his wife, was yet, however, of a more vulnerable one. Neither humiliation nor adversity had succeeded in eradicating from his mind certain proud and turbulent feelings, which, though by necessity rendered passive for the moment, were ready instruments in the hands of those around him to effect any purpose of craft with. Nothing but a profound conviction of the danger and hopelessness of his situation rendered him impenetrable ; and it was easy to discern that there were springs in his soul by which he might still

be



be governed. It had not been the lot of those who fought, yet to discover them however; and it was even plain that, if they ever did it, it would be more the work of their fortune than of their talents: yet little conciliating, or conciliatory, as were the general habits of his temper, they were not always equally intractable: for, to the forlorn and desponding heart, however cautiously it may be guarded, there will still be moments in which the voice of flattery sounds like that of friendship. Idenstein, who had address enough to perceive this, was at infinite pains to improve those moments; and he failed not, whenever they presented themselves, to pour forth such general and desultory effusions of philanthropy as he supposed calculated to make a deep impression on the mind of his hearer: that he did make, however, seemed far from answering the purpose designed by it. Kruitznor was,  
indeed,

indeed, frequently roused to momentary attention: something like hope would, on those occasions, kindle in his eye; but a still stronger feeling seemed almost immediately to quench it. He would gaze and listen with the intentness of a man who is desirous to receive as a truth what his mind, nevertheless, rejects; till, both the powers of hearing and sight being at length absorbed in some remote idea, he would start from his seat, rush into the garden, and remain there till the departure of his guest.

Idenstein had sagacity enough to conclude, that he who flies from the danger of betraying himself is more than half way in the net; and after one of these broken starts, he one day ventured to follow him. Kruitznor was standing on a small acivity that commanded the distant mountains, and looking earnestly towards  
a par-

a particular spot. The snow, which had fallen so late in the season, had rapidly thawed before the increasing heat of the sun; traces of vegetation were obvious throughout the whole country around; and a thousand streams, swelled suddenly to petty torrents, and seen both in the valley and nearer hills, brightened the prospect.

“ You are fond of this view, I think?” said Idenstein, who had frequently seen him on the same spot.

“ It looks towards Bohemia,” replied Kruitznor, motioning that way with his hand:—there was something singularly mournful in his tone:—he wore too “ a countenance more in sorrow than in anger.”

“ True—you—you are going thither?” again rejoined his inquisitive companion.

“ I was

"I *was* going thither."

"And why do you not pursue your journey?"

Kruitzner started.

"Are you not afraid to ask?" said he, fiercely.—There was something so odd in the question, and so odd in the manner in which it was put, that Idenstein felt for a moment not wholly devoid of the sensation imputed to him.

"Dare you solicit my confidence?" continued Kruitzner, in the same tone. Idenstein, though his nerves had not quite recovered the attack upon them, yet brightened up at the word confidence, and muttered something expressive of more than a civil assent.



“ Take it then, in few words—I am poor !”—The countenance of the inquirer again fell. Of all Kruitznér’s concerns, this, in fact, seemed to him the only one that did not require to be told ; and it was, unquestionably, that he least desired to hear : he ventured, however, to express his regret on the occasion ; and to add, “ that he was himself precisely in the same predicament.”

“ I thought so !” said Kruitznér, with bitter irony : “ I had heard that the acquaintance of a poor man are always discreet enough to be poor too.”—Idenstein, who had really spoken truth—not, indeed, for its own sake, but because it happened to dictate the answer most common and convenient on similar occasions, felt rebuked. During the short pause that succeeded, he had, however, time to recover his presence of mind, and to perceive all the

the difference of situation between the man who avows his poverty, and he who only suffers it to be guessed. He believed he saw himself touching a critical moment, from which much would be gained or lost to the future ; and the recollection that he acted under the Intendant gave him courage for what was to follow. He thought, moreover,—and not without reason,—that he perceived remote traces of irresolution in the countenance of Kruitzner.

“Poverty,” said he, fixing his eyes, therefore, on his companion, and raising his voice with an oratorical emphasis, “is, like all other evils, merely comparative ! I may consider myself as poor, yet be in a condition to show my regard by assisting another.—A small sum.”—Kruitzner suddenly changed colour, and the violent palpitation of his heart was distinctly visible.

"A *very small* sum," continued Idenstein,  
"I think I could command."

"Let it but enable me to accomplish my journey," said Kruitznér. — He paused, and his voice was smothered.

"Whither would you go?—and who is the person I am thus to oblige?" — Kruitznér hesitated; an indistinct apprehension crossed his mind; and the grossness of the man who could thus abruptly question him presented itself in glaring colours: but sad necessity, and newly awakened hope, struggled in his breast, with a force calculated to silence every opposing sentiment.

"With not, my kind friend!" said he, at length, after a silent conflict, and in a subdued tone, "to know what it would be  
painful

painful for me to tell, and of no avail to you to hear.—If you dare trust me, accept my promise that you will neither trust the powerless nor the ungrateful.—I have no other security to give!”—That he had proffered was by no means in Idenstein’s way to receive ; but short as his progress towards confidence had been in comparison with his expectations, yet as he found he was not likely then to derive further advantage from the conversation, he was content to accede to the terms proposed—having previously succeeded, however, in explaining his offer down to so *very* small a sum, as nearly dispelled his own fears, and completely annihilated the momentary gleam of hope he had kindled in the bosom of his companion.

Inconsiderable as was the sum Kruitznor thus obtained, and inadequate towards the purpose he so earnestly desired to accom-

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plish,



plish, it was yet such as the cruelty of his fate utterly forbade him to reject. Since his residence at M——, he had known privation and poverty in a degree which, far from having felt, he had never before even witnessed: famine itself now approached: and as he had not supposed it possible that the cold hearts of those around would induce them to lend any succour to a man who dared not sufficiently solve the enigma of his own life to proffer a hope of payment, the desperation of his fate prest so forcibly upon him, that the interference of Idenstein seemed little less than a miracle. As the fervour of this impression, however, wore off, his knowledge of mankind taught him to look in that for the cause. Idenstein quickly perceived that he was now, in turn, become a subject of much anxious observation to his new friend; who, for several days after, never saw him without striving to find in  
his

his looks and demeanour traces of some sinister design. In this, however, the penetration of Kruitznér was foiled. Idenstein had naturally a kind of pert frivolity, that wore the appearance of artlessness; he was, besides, too much on his guard to allow any motive to be discernible for his actions, save that he announced; and Kruitznér was at length induced, or, perhaps, was willing to believe, that he had really excited a sentiment of disinterested kindness in the bosom of a man, so utterly distinct from himself. This conviction taught him a little to unbend. He did it, as he believed, with circumspection; but it was not in the impetuous character of Kruitznér to reason accurately, or to guard himself at all points. His real necessities, his sanguine disposition, the dangerous habit of relying on his fate, soon divested him of his caution; and though he still preserved an inviolable silence with regard to past events, he

omitted to direct his penetration to the future.

Idenstein was careful not to throw his new acquaintance off his guard. He had now changed his battery; and, perceiving he could not allure to confidence, waited the occasion for extorting it. He had no doubt he should succeed; and, therefore, took pleasure in the pursuit: for it was among the silly foibles of his own character, to sport, as he believed, with those around him; to dupe them, while they were arrogating superior prudence; and to enjoy his triumph. It was a character that cost him dear in the end; and, even in its progress, often rendered him a contemptible and unrewarded puppet in the hands of others. In this instance, however, he was only one out of three, neither of whom suspected the length or importance of the clue they were unravelling. The  
ingenuity

ingenuity of Idenstein, aided by his apparent insignificance, was not, however, unsuccessful. The victim plunged deeper and deeper into the snare: and, so well did his crafty adversary understand how to tempt his wants by the display and loan of petty sums, that the unfortunate Kruitznér at length started as from a dream; and became suddenly sensible to a new and undefined misery, of which, amid all his calamities, he had hitherto been ignorant. Diffimulation or fear were alike uncongenial to his nature; but he perceived the absolute necessity of practising the former, and he strove to regulate his conduct by that conviction. Idenstein was not, however, deceived: what followed between them became, therefore, a contest of cunning, in which the latter had all the advantage. It was in his choice, at any time, to rouse the proud spirit of Kruitznér to a point of defiance that should put him within his power,



power, and it was not seldom that he touched upon the experiment. He was not wholly without a personal fear, however, that taught him to forbear in time : while Kruitzner, on his side, strove no less sedulously to avoid a crisis so dangerous ; and secretly cherished the only hope he had now for a long period been able to entertain—that of accumulating, by means of this forbearance, a small hoard that should supply the necessities of his wife and child, while he himself undertook the desperate project of pursuing his journey to Bohemia on foot. How great would have been his surprise to have known that this scheme was perhaps the only one which all parties, could they have penetrated it, would have favoured ! Yet such, as far as the junto at M—— was concerned, was undoubtedly the case.

By comparing the inquiries that had  
reached

taught them with their own observations, this sagacious circle had, at length, satisfied themselves that Kruitznér and his wife were in reality above the rank they avowed; and busy imagination had eked out their small share of discernment, with a conclusion that one or the other sprang from a family of rank, and was become liable, by a disgraceful connection, to its resentment. Had Madame Weilburg been consulted, she would at once have pronounced the transgressor upon his hereditary honours to be Kruitznér; in whose person, though faded, there were yet sufficient traces of dignity and grace to arrest female attention: but the jury on this occasion were men; and they, with one voice, pronounced Josephine to be unquestionably the culprit. Enlightened partly by their own suggestions, and partly by her eyes, they saw beauty, grandeur, and all, in short, that was really to be seen in her—except virtue: and, as she

was

was not *their* relation, they were inclined to think that a non-essential in her character. In fact, poor Josephine, though very unconscious of the obligation, certainly owed something to their suspicion of her wanting it : for, though each would individually have had little reluctance to consign Kruitznor to hard diet and a dungeon, there was not one of them could, without scruple, determine on giving up his wife. Of these sentiments the Intendant was the leader. Her exterior charms, more than any interest created by her situation, had first induced him to step forth her protector; and this circumstance was so far fortunate, as it shielded her, on every occasion, from the wanton insolence of Idenstein, who attributed views to his employer more decided than the indolence and coldness of his nature really prompted him to pursue.

The project Kruitznor had continued to meditate, he, at length, confided to his wife. Those only who had known the previous events of her life could tell the heart-sickness it was calculated to excite. Yet such was the peculiarity of their fate, that remonstrance would have been cruelty. To be able together to withdraw privately from M—— seemed little short of an impossibility: that she and her child should pursue the journey on foot was wholly such. There was not the remotest hope that Idenstein, or indeed any human being, would assist them in undertaking it openly:—so far the contrary, that both were sensible mystery and suspicion had attached itself too much to their fate to allow the circle in which they lived voluntarily to lose sight of them. Yet the importance of the journey was no less felt by Josephine than her husband. She was deeply sensible that he had never loved any human being as  
he



he loved her. Nothing, therefore, but the extremest despair could have induced him to think of quitting her; nor, on her side, was there a consideration on earth, save that before her, which could make her consent to their separation. Yet, in addition to the exquisite suffering attending such an event, she felt she had another trial to encounter, which the habits of Kruitzner's mind did not even lead him to suspect: in a word, that it would require an almost invincible fortitude to remain in the house they now inhabited with no other companion than Marcellin. Superstition had, nevertheless, little or no share in her repugnance. The report of Madame Weilburg, who was never weary of talking about her late "dear and beautiful Countess," had sufficiently persuaded her that the story related of the latter was, if not wholly ill-founded, at least false in its catastrophe. She had, in fact, gathered  
enough

enough to be assured that the Countess was still in existence; nor were the opinions and character of Josephine, even at the worst, such as inclined her to tremble at the dead. Had they been so, the interior of the house, marked by a depressing and faded magnificence, distributed into intricate offices, once crowded with domestics, now dark, still, and lonely, would have been sufficient to have appalled her. It was in itself a body without a soul—a region whence every thing vital appeared strangely to have fled. But the fears of Josephine were of a nearer and less chimerical nature, and originated in the situation of the house itself. It stood at the extremest verge of a ruinous and half-unpeopled suburb. A spacious garden extended behind from the Prince's grounds to the high-road, surrounded by a wall extremely dilapidated, and so low in many places as almost to invite intruders; while the neglected state in which the  
whole

whole had long been suffered to remain gave it an appearance particularly rude and solitary. That wing of the house which was nearest to the town adjoined to a mansion that had formerly been possessed by the retinue of the Prince ; it was now uninhabited, and formed a gloomy barrier between the palace and the habitation of Kruitzner. No sound, therefore, that issued from the latter could be heard by any human ear ; nor could a possible protector be summoned thither : yet was the house every where so slightly barred, either because the narrow circle of the town secured its neighbourhood from depredation, or that the numerous train of the Countess rendered precaution unnecessary, that any night wanderer might without difficulty enter it.

Kruitzner had himself assented to this observation, when made by his wife during the early days of their abode there. But  
misery

misery is an exclusive feeling, and leaves no room for meaner and subordinate ones: the circumstance had therefore faded from his mind, as altogether immaterial. Nor, while enclosing Josephine and his child in the same apartment with himself, did he believe he had any thing to apprehend, or to lose. Beyond that apartment and the adjoining saloon, of which they had also taken possession, a long range of rooms extended—spacious, and chiefly dismantled. Marcellin, to whom the general appearance of the house was not very inviting, had at first found some difficulty to reconcile himself to so cheerless a residence. Curiosity, however, led him soon to explore it: nor did he fail to return on these occasions with strange tales to his mother, either of noises that were in fact caused by some remaining articles of furniture accidentally displaced by himself, or dungeons which proved, upon examination, to be nothing but cellars and



recesses. His parents sometimes smiled at, and sometimes chid him. Josephine, in particular, who had often occasion to prove the fallacy of his fears, had at length ceased to heed them; and, as the boy, though not without the capricious cowardice of his age, was, on the whole, of an enterprising character, he had ceased to heed them also.

If, under these circumstances of real or imaginary danger, terror at any moment assailed Josephine herself, the consciousness of their poverty forbade her to cherish it. Even at the worst, Kruitznor was ever near her—active, intrepid, and manly: but of his protection she was now on the point of being deprived; and, however small the temptation her situation offered, either to plunder, or offence of any kind, it is still the lot of woman to fear the evils of wantonness and levity—evils, which the very certainty that she must fear, and, whatever  
her

her vigour of mind, may be unable to repel, often tempts the wicked or the thoughtless to inflict! Josephine justly distrusted her own fortitude when the voice of Kruitznor should be no longer near to encourage, or his arm to shield her; when the very apprehension of the sufferings he was encountering might unstring her nerves; or the possibility of his eternal absence overwhelm her heart with despondency. Yet the trial, fearful as it appeared, she believed must be encountered; and, what was indispensable, she would have despised herself had she wholly shrunk from. Vigorously collecting, therefore, the stronger powers of her mind, she resolved silently to abide the issue, whatever it might prove, with resolution.

The frame, however, is not always equal to sustaining the struggles of the heart. A just mode of thinking, and a happy temperament, had done much throughout life

for Josephine; but they could not do every thing; and, despite of her efforts, her cheek announced to Kruitznor that all was not well within her bosom. His own feelings interpreted her's. Days of painful irresolution succeeded on both sides, during which their deep abstraction, and the heavy rains which continued incessantly to fall, rendered them insensible to the total solitude in which they had been permitted to live. Marcellin was not so inattentive. He was extremely tired of the wet weather, which kept him within the house, and very much surprised and angry that nobody came to enliven it. The first gleam of sunshine was a moment of transport to him: he skipt twenty times in a quarter of an hour to the door, and, at last, bethought himself of requesting permission to pay a short visit to Madame Weilburg, whose closet, he was secretly not without hopes, still contained some of those good things he had been accustomed

customed

customed to find there. Marcellin, however, like most of his age, forgot his promise of returning as soon as he was out of sight. He was right in suspecting the cakes and sweetmeats were not exhausted. He got more than his portion, and saw besides such a number of entertaining sights, as put home entirely out of his head. His stay, indeed, so far exceeded his usual limits, that his parents began to be alarmed. Josephine was already anxiously near the door, and her husband was preparing to seek the little stray, when he suddenly jumped in, wild with spirits and indulgence.—“Weilburg and his wife were drest *so* fine!—the Intendant was *so* busy!—Mr. Idenstein too was there! the Prince’s own coach was going out!—and if his parents would but look out of the window, they would see it bring home the stranger to the palace!” While Kruitznor and Josephine smiled at this prattle, which was blended with a thousand gay



and infantine careffes, the innocent child wound it up, by pronouncing, in the name of *the stranger*, that of the being on earth most hostile to the safety and repose of his father.

Josephine, who saw the change in her husband's countenance, had hardly time to silence the transports of the boy, and hurry him, with her, into another room, when Idenstein entered—adorned, indeed, as had been described, in holiday foppery, and with a repetition of the same hateful intelligence. He addressed himself familiarly to Madame Krutzner as she past him, and coldly to her husband. They had differed when they last met, and Idenstein apologised, with an air of conceited importance, for an absence which he secretly knew to be acceptable. Krutzner, whose mind was at that moment a chaos of perturbation and surprise, was little disposed to consider their  
relative

relative situations, or how far worse his own had insensibly become since he entered M——: impoverished, indeed—but no man's slave—for he was then no man's debtor!—personal insult or degradation, in any possible shape, he had never yet known: and, if the late transactions with Idenstein had sometimes inspired a transient and painful feeling that resembled the latter, he had banished it from his bosom, as one who believes death itself to be preferable. With such habits and sentiments, roused as they now were by the most poignant recollections, the frivolous being before him became almost as completely annihilated to his eyes as to his heart. Idenstein, possessed with his own self-importance, did not easily discover this: but when he did, he well knew how to harrow up the proud spirit that could teach it him, by an abrupt and insolent demand, which it was impossible to satisfy.

Kruitznér, forced thus hatefully back upon the misery of the present, again shrunk into himself, with an indignant pause, and questioned his soul upon all the possibilities of the future. He was now every way taken in the toils! A few hours alone, probably, intervened between him and the formidable enemy he had hitherto successfully avoided. That he could no longer do so, he had every reason to suspect:—but, at the very best, the situation in which he was involved with Idenstein (the barrier once broken between them) exposed him to humiliations which he found it impossible to endure.—To make good his long-intended departure on that very night seemed the only method of escaping them; and dangerous, therefore, as the attempt might prove, both to himself and Josephine, there was no longer any alternative but to hazard it. This resolution made, the tempest of his soul gradually subsided: a kind of desperate

desperate stillness seemed to lock up his faculties.—He half-smoothed his brow; dismissed, though with some difficulty, his troublesome companion; and, closing the doors even against his family, sat down, in solitude and gloom, to meditate throughout the evening on the future fate of that wife and child whom he was thus driven by cruel necessity to abandon, and to calculate by what further suffering he was himself yet to expiate the wanton follies of the past.—Such was, now, the forlorn and hopeless situation of a man, who might, at one time, have said, with Anthony,

—————“ I was so great—so happy—so beloved —  
“ Fate could not ruin me;—till I took pains,  
“ And worked against my fortune :—chid her from me,  
“ And turn'd her loose : —yet still she came again.  
“ My careless days, and my luxurious nights,  
“ At length have wearied her!” —————

He who had announced himself at  
M—— simply as Frederick Kruitznor  
was



was by birth a Bohemian, and of the first class of nobility. Under the obscure name he now bore, he had buried that transmitted to him through a long line of illustrious ancestors, and which his father had hoped to see descend untarnished in the person of his son. Those hopes had long since vanished : and, before the period at which Kruitznor arrived at M——, Count Siegendorff had ceased to know whether or not he had a son in existence.

The Count himself, though his character was in the end not wholly free from a certain degree of austerity grafted upon it by afflicting circumstances, was naturally noble, generous, and humane. He was not without the pride of rank ; but it acted only in a certain sphere. His moderation rendered him dear to his inferiors, in an age when subordination was vassalage, and every lord a petty despot. He was not young  
when

when he became a father, and he looked with the peculiar fondness of one who had hardly hoped to be such, on the son whom a dying wife trebly endeared to him. In the education of the young man nothing was neglected that was either honourable or useful : nor were his talents such as to disgrace his preceptors. His boyish days, if they gave not the promise of any eminent vigour of mind, were yet marked by quickness of apprehension and feeling : and in his rapid progress towards manhood, his father believed he saw the promise of an honourable life. The person of the young Count was early formed. The hardy exercises to which he was habituated, rendered it vigorous and manly. His features were fine ; his voice was commanding ; his eye then sparkled with that flame which now burnt so dimly in the socket ; and he had a loftiness of demeanour which seemed the expression of a noble soul.

To this character of person, that of his mind, however, did not correspond. He had rather pride than dignity; and, unhappily, that very failing, which, when it springs from the consciousness of noble descent, sometimes becomes the source of noble actions, had on him a very opposite effect;—for he was proud, not of his ancestors, but of himself. His mind had not vigour enough to trace causes in their effects. The splendor, therefore, which the united efforts of education, fortune, rank, and the merits of his progenitors, threw around him, was early mistaken for a personal gift—a sort of emanation proceeding from the lustre of his own endowments, and for which, as he believed, he was indebted to Nature, he resolved not to be accountable to man. By feelings like these, the grand principles of filial duty and affection could not but be early undermined; and, reasoning progressively upon this system, every new distinction which  
advancing

advancing life necessarily brought with it, to a young man introduced under auspices so favourable, nourished the secret fault of his nature. \* He never stopt to inquire what he could have made himself, had he been born any thing but what he was. He was distinguished!—he saw it—he felt it—he was persuaded he should ever be so; and while yet a youth in the house of his father—dependent on his paternal affection, and entitled to demand credit of the world merely for what he was to be—he secretly looked down upon that world as made only for him.

The crimes, however, by which such a character might have been stained were, fortunately, not congenial to his: the love of pleasure was the great spring of his soul—a passion little remarkable at a very early period; for at a very early period the circle of his pleasures could not be other than



than narrow: nor were boyish sports the objects of serious reprehension; but when nature and education seemed to have done their part, and the important one of man was to commence, how was his father shocked and astonished to find all that should have led to generous emulation or heroic virtue perverted solely to the purposes of self-indulgence and voluptuous dissipation. Willingly, however, did the tender parent allow for the force of temptations youth seldom wholly withstands. He depended on the innate virtues of his son to arrest their progress after a certain period, and on his own paternal authority finally to subdue them: but the young Count, wanton with prosperity, was little disposed to pause in the career of his pleasures; and the first pointed reprimand of his father conveyed to the latter that most afflicting of all pangs—a conviction that his reprimands would for the future be fruitless.

less. With trembling uncertainty he ventured to probe deeper into the heart of his son, and learnt to shrink before the fearful apprehension of seeing himself despised there. It was now time to assert his own claims;—Bohemia was on the point of plunging into a bloody and ruinous war\*; and the Austrian yoke, almost unanimously rejected, offered to the brave and independent a sphere of action calculated to awaken every nobler energy of the soul. The state had not yet, however, summoned all its supporters: they were called upon by turns individually; and their collective force was reserved for that period when all hope of a peaceful adjustment should be frustrated. Count Siegendorf had been among the first of those who had armed their vassals: he now proposed to draw them into action, eager to execute a plan he had long medi-

\* Commonly called the War of Thirty Years.

tated of entrusting the command of them to his son ;—persuaded that he should, in so doing, afford him an occupation gratifying to the turbulence of his youth, and which, as it had been that of his ancestors, their example would teach him to fill with glory.

The young man was both naturally and habitually intrepid. The avowal of this determination was, therefore, received by him with unfeigned satisfaction : and he prest forward the preparations for his own departure to the camp, with a zeal that once more invigorated the half-extinguished hopes of his father.

Again was he received in a new circle with those flattering testimonies of regard on which he was so well disposed to rely. Much was expected from him, and much, therefore, in advance was granted to him ;  
but

but he had not been long with the army before it was discovered that glory was in his eyes only another mode of pleasure, and not exactly of the kind he most coveted: he was, besides, self-opinionated enough ever to believe he might pursue it his own way, and arrogant enough to assert his opinions; in the persuasion that those who controverted them had, as was indeed sometimes the case, no other advantage over him but that of which he always denied the validity — experience. Under these circumstances he could not be deemed a good soldier: and such was the nature of the war, that the cause he did not serve his influence and example were calculated to injure. Of his personal courage, indeed, no doubt was entertained, for he had frequently given proofs of it equally useless and rash: but the diminution of his followers, and the impoverished state of his finances, were particulars, that, as they could



not be concealed, soon brought home to his father the conviction that he was no longer to be trusted as a leader. Complaints extorted from all superior to him in command daily confirmed this. The Count knew too well his own importance in the state, to believe any member of it would thus speak of his darling son, and the heir of a powerful domain, unless impelled by the strongest necessity. That necessity continually became more urgent, and the complaints more importunate. The young man, relying on his personal merit, and full of an arrogant self-sufficiency that left him little disposed to weigh what was passing around, except it pressed upon his pride, was far, meantime, from being aware of the storm that impended: it burst, therefore, like thunder, when an authoritative mandate absolutely took from him all future command or influence over the vassals of his family. This mandate he was sufficiently inclined

to

to dispute : but he now, for the first time, began indistinctly to perceive, that, whatever might be his own estimation of himself, he had not yet made progress enough in life to enter the lists of honour or responsibility with his father. A confused sense of shame, blended with a suspicion of error, passed rapidly across his mind ; but it was a troublesome sort of feeling, and he dismissed it as such.

The Count, nevertheless, had not thus mortified, or degraded his son, without preparing somewhat that might soften the blow. He had secretly solicited, and obtained for him, a command in the army, which, though of infinitely less importance to the state than that he had lost, was not ill-suited to his rank in life, and secured to him the opportunity of recovering that estimation his indiscretions had robbed him of. And now then all again was well in

the mind of the youth. "He had lost a command given only by the indulgence of a father ;—or rather, one which he might consider as the claim of his birth : that he had just received, though less distinguished, was therefore infinitely more honourable. It was bestowed by his country—it was a proof of his desert !—a proof that he commanded fortune, and might henceforth defy her frowns !" —He was nearer the experiment than he expected. The post in which he was stationed stood exposed in a particular manner to the attacks of the enemy. A furious alarm was given during the night. The duties of his situation demanded every exertion of promptitude or valour ; but he was buried in a licentious debauch, and incapable of acting. The post was lost—his honour tarnished—the furious resentment of his countrymen could no longer be controuled : —he was dismissed, by the general voice,

from

from all employment, and banished to his estates : the lenity extorted by his rank alone moderating an indignation that might have led to consequences the most fatal.

And now he began to suspect that he did not command fortune. A fierceness, dormant in his nature, and ever roused when his personal feelings were offended, impelled him to some desperate act of vengeance and rebellion. But against a nation—a father ! a father whose almost unlimited indulgence could not fail to inspire him with some affection, though it extended not to the weighing parental feelings in balance with his own !—no remedy, no alleviation, presented itself. In the first transports of a soul, thus rent, as it were, with contending passions, he thought not—

“ To throw away the worse part of it,

“ And live the better for the other half ;”



but, fixing at once upon the most desperate resolution, he collected a quantity of gold and jewels, more than sufficient for a temporary provision, and, attended only by two servants, passed into Saxony. Alas! he little knew the lingering banishment to which he condemned himself.

In the first tumult and agony inflicted by this event, Count Siegendorf would willingly have made almost any sacrifice to recall his son. Unhappily the greatness of his efforts only confirmed in the latter the idea of his own value in society. Placing to the account of general regret and estimation that which was, in fact, simply the effect of parental fondness, he conditioned, he protracted, he wavered, till the resentment of the Count was at length roused to temporary alienation: he took the field himself, to atone for the misconduct of his son; and the softer feelings of nature insensibly

sibly died away before the increasing tumult of war. Nor were the pleasures of a gay and luxurious court less adverse to them in the bosom of the young man. He now, for the first time, felt himself wholly uncontrouled. His resources were great, his reception every-where splendid; his personal accomplishments and lavish expenditure created him flatterers, if not friends: there was only one spot in the world where he had ever heard rebuke: to that spot, therefore, he daily felt an increasing reluctance to return; for he was not wise enough to know that the language of unqualified panegyric is always that of indifference or insincerity.

Time, however, which alike dissipates the illusions of the flatterer and the flattered, at length began to strip the son of Count Siegendorf of the lustre in society that title had hitherto given him. He had been

received there at first as what he really was—a dissipated, turbulent, and inconsiderate young man : it was now suspected that he would prove a profligate one. His former character excluded him the society of the rigidly virtuous : the latter seemed likely to degrade him to a class much below it. The worldly wise, the prudent, the proud, alternately began to shun him :—these, however, did not fill the foremost line of the circle in which he lived, and he missed them not. An evil he deemed infinitely more serious now seemed to menace him : his pecuniary resources were drawing to an end, and he saw no mode of repairing them, but by a step at once so humiliating to his self-love, and adverse to his habits of life, that he could not resolve to take it. His letters to his father were answered by remonstrances, which, though they sometimes awakened a tender sentiment of regret in his heart, were insupportably painful to his

his

his pride. That pride at length found another hope on which to rest—hostile, indeed, to the interests of his country, but eminently favourable to himself. The Austrian power had every appearance of being restored throughout Bohemia; an event which, if it took place, would necessarily bring with it the disgrace of those who had disgraced him. To this hope he now almost anxiously looked forward: for he had hovered too long in Saxony, the banners of which were already displayed in the Imperial cause. He even debated with himself whether he should not join them, and give to his own return the air of a triumph:—this, however, a secret sense of honour and filial duty forbade. He therefore quitted the court of the Elector, to carry his dissipation and follies elsewhere; but he did not fail to sound his father with respect to his plans, and to hint to the latter the security he might at least



least derive to himself by the apparent secession of his son from a cause likely to prove unfortunate.

To projects half disgraceful, and, as he believed, wholly illusive, Count Siegen-dorf listened with disdain. Three years had nearly rolled away without producing that reformation his incessant and repeated indulgences taught him to expect. His fortune had been every way drained; but he had spent it gloriously in his own person, and unworthily only in that of his son. He now loudly and vehemently proclaimed his intention of renouncing that son, if he delayed to return to the paths of honour; —he did delay, till reconciliation was no longer practicable, and the whole weight of his father's indignation was ready to fall upon him. As he had reason to know his personal liberty would be endangered through the steps taken by the latter, who  
secretly

secretly moved every foreign state by turns to give up a young man who thus disgraced his own, he changed his name, and became a wanderer on the northern frontier.

Here he at length painfully learnt that he could no longer command fortune.—Fortune !—alas ! he could no longer command even the meanest of her votaries. All resources from his father were finally cut off; his own, estimated by his habits of expense, were nearly exhausted : the irritation of his mind had united with the dissipation of his life to impair his health : a tedious and consumptive malady preyed upon it ; and he, who three years before had thought the world was made for him, now began to believe he was only to occupy that small portion of it allotted to the humblest individual. The virtue yet lingering in a heart not wholly hardened or corrupt induced him to resolve on sparing his father  
the

the final pang. He altered his route, and continued to wander through several towns of Pomerania and Lower Saxony—frugal, less from necessity than from absolute indifference to all that had once seduced or allured him. He was at length obliged, by increasing weakness and indisposition, to stop at Hamburg.—Though once living only in the tumult of conviviality, he had now no longer strength or spirits to support the noise of a house of public entertainment; hiring, therefore, an apartment in a remote quarter of the town, he seriously began to deliberate whether he should await death, or firmly advance to meet it. It was at this crisis his guardian angel first interfered; the spirit of peace and honourable poverty was in the air he breathed, and soon communicated its invigorating influence to his heart.

The apartments nearest those of the Count  
were

were inhabited by a man of the name of Michelli; a Florentine by birth, and of a family which, though not of the first rank, was yet noble. Born indigent, but with a taste for the sciences, Michelli had pursued them with avidity under the greatest man of the age. But as he had not talents or protectors to shelter him from that persecution to which even Galileo finally became a victim, he was obliged, at an early period of life, to quit his country. He carried with him an only daughter; and fixing his residence where he believed he might with safety pursue his tastes, supplied the narrow circle of their domestic wants by his ingenuity in making mathematical instruments. The invention of the telescope, yet in its infancy, had already excited the wonder and admiration of the learned: and though far from having attained that perfection which the masterly skill of future genius was to produce, it had already  
thrown



thrown a new and almost supernatural light over the regions of science. To give it those powers of which he believed it capable was the constant aim and employment of Michelli. But while anxiously, and even industriously, tracing the progress of knowledge, the philosopher had yet in his moments of leisure an eye for the human countenance, and a heart for human feelings. The young invalid, consequently, did not pass unnoticed by him. He perceived that he was friendless and a stranger: it was precisely his own situation in society; and, without officiously obtruding, he sought therefore the occasion of obliging him. To those simple courtesies of life which spring spontaneously from the heart, the young man, amidst all his varied experience, had yet been a stranger, and they made therefore a singular impression upon his. Insensibly he permitted civility to advance into flight, but social, intercourse; and

and it was on one of these occasions he first beheld Josephine. Though then in the very flower of youth, she was hardly so handsome as she afterwards became. She had the Italian dignity of features, a chaste simplicity of manner, together with an understanding which it seemed the peculiar privilege of her heart to develope, and which, like her person, received from that its last and most touching charm. Her beauty was not overlooked by the Count, but his heart and his passions were alike joyless and inert. To his palled imagination life was already vapid: he believed he had exhausted its prime sources of pleasure—love, friendship, and flattery; yet he did not quit the humble hearth of Michelli and his daughter without carrying away with him the recollection of faces and voices which, though they spoke not absolutely the language of either, yet seemed in sweet alliance with all.

A subject

A subject of contemplation, whatever might be its nature, was but too likely to banish Sleep from a pillow she had lately seldom deigned to visit: morning, of consequence, found the young man considerably worse than he had been the preceding evening; and Michelli, who missed him at the hour when chance usually brought them together, somewhat suddenly entered his chamber. A faint pleasure kindled on the cheek of the Count, not unmingled however with surprise: yet, accustomed as he had ever been to respectful attendance and distant homage, his proud and repulsive spirit nevertheless stood abashed before a man who, though not wholly unacquainted with ceremony, used it only as the substitute for regard, and, in very simplicity of manners, dismissed the one as soon as his heart received the other. Michelli felt himself indeed interested alike by the situation and character of his new acquaintance, in whom he

was

was surprised to find a degree of intelligence and knowledge not often to be met with even in those of maturer years; and, under the impulse of a first impression, he placed to the credit of nature, and a love of study, what was in fact the result of a highly-cultivated education.

In the hospitable and humane attentions of her father Josephine almost equally shared. Her heart had never yet obeyed any impulse save that communicated by his; nor did she attach either value or importance to those little offices of kindness she was now induced to shew. The exterior of the Count had not made that impression on her which, in his brighter days it probably would have done. She had not seen him often, however, before she discovered that he was interesting and amiable: but sickness had robbed him of the graces of his person, and corroding reflections preyed on those of



his mind: both gradually began to re-affert themselves.—Contemplated indeed thus,

——— “in his calm of Nature,  
“With all the gentler virtues brooding on him,”

it would have been hardly possible to believe he had been so lately the victim of intemperate pleasure and ungovernable passions. Far indeed was Josephine from suspecting it: the languor and melancholy that preyed upon him she imputed solely to affliction or ill health; and she insensibly began to look with tender and increasing sympathy on the sufferings of a man who had knowledge to command respect, and endowments that seemed to give him a claim to distinction.

If the society of the Count was daily more agreeable to Josephine, to her father it soon became nearly indispensable. Michelli corresponded with almost every man

of

of science in Europe: but as the narrowness of his circumstances made heavy demands upon his time, his daughter frequently became his amanuensis. This office was at first shared, and at length wholly engrossed, by his young acquaintance. The Count, besides being skilled in all the modern languages, wrote Latin with a fluency and correctness far exceeding the abilities of Michelli himself; nor were his acquirements contemptible even in those branches of knowledge to which the other more particularly applied. The intercourse of mind, therefore, became every day cemented between them; preserving just those shades of difference which distinguish the disciple from the master: and if the modern Alcibiades fell short in talents and graces of the Grecian one, he was at least hardly less zealous or docile in his temporary pursuit of wisdom.

By a singular transition the son of Count Siegendorf was now become a familiar guest at the frugal board and fire-side of Michelli; and never did days pass to him so delightfully. His understanding there daily improved; his temper harmonised; the vigour of his person returned;—his passions, acting for the first time under the impulse of reason and virtue, gave just energy enough to his manners to mark the features of his mind; and finally—in the contemplation of all—the heart of Josephine became irrecoverably lost.

During the state of convalescence and languor that had preceded this period, love was a passion that had rather stolen by degrees into the bosom of the Count than imperiously asserted a claim there; but its influence was not the less powerful. It now reigned despotically and unrivalled. In proportion as the inquietudes of passion began

gan to seize upon him, he adverted however with more acute anxiety to his own real condition in life. Could he even have resolved to trample on the most sacred laws of hospitality or gratitude for the indulgence of his inclination, he felt that nothing short of systematical and consummate hypocrisy could afford him the remotest probability of success. The love of Josephine was a generous, tender, and genuine feeling, that looked out in her eyes, and spoke in her voice; but "no thought infirm altered her cheek:"—it was a feeling that would have gone through the world with a deserving object, and encountered without shrinking every sorrow that world could inflict; but it would have withered before the breath of disgrace. The Count, without being exactly able to calculate its force, yet felt its nature; and was deeply sensible that such a woman must be at once resigned, or honourably secured. Yet that



his father should consent to such an ill-afforted union was an idea so extravagant that he dared not for a moment indulge it: and hers, though he might be tempted by the moderation of his wishes to bestow his daughter on an obscure and deserving young man, would most unquestionably withhold her from the libertine son of Count Siegendorf: one whose character, when known, would inspire no confidence, and whose age and rank would easily enable him to break through any tie not sanctioned by his family.

A temporary gloom again clouded the features and mind of the Count; the question had been, indeed, decided in his own bosom, from the moment it became such; for it had never yet made a part of his character to contend with any passion; much less did it now, when to yield seemed a virtue: But the manner in which he should present himself to Michelli; and,  
ah!

ah ! the point still more difficult to decide, that in which he should address his daughter, became the constant subject of his meditations, and once more banished repose from his pillow. He now watched Josephine with those impassioned eyes which taught her soul timidly to shrink into itself, and present to his anxious imagination and quick feelings an exterior of coldness that almost drove him to distraction. With a perturbed heart, he at length ventured to sound the opinion of Michelli. The philosopher paused upon it—like a philosopher—or, as the Count rather thought, like the executioner who holds his axe suspended over the neck of the criminal. He answered at length, however, with his accustomed simplicity and plainness : He had conceived highly of the talents of the young man ; he had no reason to doubt his conduct ; of his family he was but little solicitous to inquire : for the story of mis-

fortune and emigration presented to him at the first period of their acquaintance, when, as it seemed no interested purpose could possibly be served by it, he never suspected could be other than true : but he was a philosopher of the later ages ; and though he lived chiefly among the stars, he was aware that a little terrestrial provision was necessary towards the support of a household, however simple its plan. To this objection the young man was already prepared with an answer. Previous to his explanation with Michelli, he had had the precaution to convert many valuable jewels into money, which he lodged safely in respectable hands ; and though, as the son of Count Siegendorf, poverty had long stared him in the face, he was not indigent when considered only as the future son-in-law of Michelli. For the first time in his life, too, he now ventured to hint that he had talents—education :—and was rendered modest enough

enough by love to be surpris'd when he found the plea admitted. Michelli referred him finally to his daughter—and, in so doing, seem'd to the over-wrought mind of the Count to sign his death-warrant. He did not long, however, continue thus diffident; the passion that animated him soon found or made its opportunity; and Josephine was too much overwhelmed with the consciousness of her own feelings to be able to conceal from him that he was beloved beyond his most sanguine expectations.—Michelli soon after bestowed the hand of his daughter on the heir of Count Siegendorf, without knowing that he was raising her to a rank the proudest in the city would have envied;—that he was consigning her to a fate the humblest might pity.

Time did not render the Count indifferent to the blessing thus conferred. It continued to revolve; he became a father, and, in becoming



coming so, the recollection of his own was forcibly awakened. For near six years all that had past on his native soil had been to him a blank ; he now looked often on Josephine and his son, and anxiously wished that he could have transplanted them thither. Alas ! the dangerous wish was one day to be most fatally indulged ! the tranquil and philosophic ease in which he lived, nevertheless, for a considerable period subdued it ; but it returned with accumulated force, and acquired every day fresh activity from a thousand remote and incidental feelings, which, however, all tended to one object. The radical fault of his character was yet far from being extirpated : for whether under the influence of virtuous or illicit passions, whether revelling in the courts of princes, or living in the bosom of frugality and temperance, it was *self*, and self only, that had hitherto guided all his actions ; and even at a crisis, when he was willing to  
believe

believe that filial duty and honor gave rise to his returning sensibility, it was strangely compounded of that pride and self-love the avenging angel had not yet wrung out of his heart.

After long and deep reflection, he at length ventured to address his father. His letter was couched in mysterious terms, but they were those of contrition. That he had still much to be forgiven was evident; yet such was the confusion of his mind while writing, and his consciousness that in his union with Josephine—prejudice apart—he had nothing to blush for, that his expressions seemed to announce him proud of some unexplained offence, and more disposed to assert his rights than to atone for his follies. He had, however, no cause to suppose the letter reached its destination. The apprehension that his personal liberty might be endangered by a discovery of the  
place

place of his abode induced him to send it through a very circuitous channel, and waraged throughout all Germany with too much fury to excite any reasonable surprise at its failure. It was long, nevertheless, before he persuaded himself it had failed. The interval was filled with impatient expectation—broken starts—deep reveries in which his wife could have no share, and which insensibly stole him from her arms and her society. She often perceived a strange anxiety and perturbation in his countenance that irresistibly communicated its influence to her heart; but though she had no reason to doubt his love, there was at those moments a haughty and repulsive fierceness in his temper that alike threw soothing and expostulation at a distance.

Where the error of her choice had been Josephine was at a loss to discover, but she  
felt

felt she had erred. Gifted as her husband appeared by nature—graced by education—passionately attached to her—suitable in years—and accordant in tastes, she yet became painfully sensible that she was mismatched. Long indeed might she have sought the cause ; for no feeling in her own bosom had ever yet taught her, that a mind ill at peace with itself must inevitably scatter a blight on the minds of all around.

But Siegendorf was at length no longer master of his emotions or his secret : of the whole circle of human failings, deceit was the one least congenial to his nature ; and in a furious conflict of self-reproach and impatience, he poured out at once to Michelli and his daughter the extraordinary story in which they were so deeply involved. Astonishment seemed for a time to suspend the faculties of both. Michelli, alarmed, flattered, and grieved, hardly knew what



what was the predominant sentiment of his mind. Alas ! Josephine knew too well that of hers. A dream of grandeur and magnificence did, indeed, transiently glitter before her eyes, as the phantoms were presented there ; and she perceived, by the detail of her husband, that all of either which ambition could covet was probably included in her gains : it was for her heart only to calculate its losses ; and that at once told her the immeasurable difference between them. She had given her hand to a man gifted, as she believed, by Nature beyond his fortunes : she perceived on the contrary she had united herself to one who debased them. In the simplicity of her first choice she had been every thing to her husband :—she was now only one of many objects, and perhaps in the end the least valued. Ill-omened did the exchange appear to her, from content to magnificence : and, for the first time in her life, the very softness and  
diffidence

diffidence of her nature made her unjust ; for she imputed all the singularity of his late conduct to repentance, and all his repentance to her own want of desert. Judgment and consciousness, however, soon rectified the error of her heart. Without trying the past by what might probably be a fastidious refinement, she saw it was her duty to extract happiness from the future. The conduct of her husband rendered it evident that she had been passionately beloved by him ; and when she weighed it with his past life and modes of thinking, she saw with modest wonder how greatly she had been esteemed. There was no reason to suspect that the sentiments she had once inspired could possibly be extinguished in his bosom, even if they had undergone a temporary suspension ; they might yet therefore be rendered a source of happiness to both : or rather, she felt that,

if

if they became such to him, her own would be sufficiently ascertained.

Those feelings and perplexities which had been very indistinctly expressed by the Count, presented themselves meantime at full to the cool judgment of Michelli. It was clear to him indeed that the letter had probably never reached Prague; but it was not easy to determine whether, if it had, the event would have been fortunate. He perceived at once the only evil that had escaped the imagination of Josephine—the possibility of her husband's making his peace at the expense of her honour. All that a tender heart could picture to afflict itself hers indeed had for the moment presented; but nothing that could degrade the object of its fondest affections: nor would even the voice of her father have been heard probably on that subject without indignation.—

Michelli

Michelli spared her the grievous and humiliating idea, by addressing himself, where he believed he ought, to her husband. But he had yet known only half the character of the man to whom he spoke. That fiery and rebellious spirit, which brooked not controul from his own father, revolted to its first nature at the remotest thought of it in hers. Conceiving at once all the extent of Michelli's surmises, however cautiously they were expressed, the Count was not just enough to feel that his own deceit had incurred the indignity, and he resented it with the same turbulent disdain that so often marked his conduct. Michelli was justly roused to anger. They parted on ill terms. The Count retired to his own apartments to deliberate, and his determination, as before, was fatal to his honour.

To abandon Josephine or her child would never probably, in his worst moments, have



occurred to him; for he was not a villain; if the man who always first considers himself can be securely deemed otherwise. In this case, however, it was a crime to which he had no temptation; for he fondly loved her; nor was he less attached to his son. Even for Michelli he had the most unqualified esteem: but of the mode of making either of them happy or prosperous his imperious temper directed him to render himself sole judge.—Among various methods of subduing his father's heart, the Count had ever deemed one to be infallible—a personal appeal. It was a project he had long secretly meditated, and almost resolved on; but to which he now believed it impossible that, under the impression Michelli had conceived of his designs, he should consent: nor could he be assured that Josephine herself, guided by her father's judgment, would not vehemently oppose his departure.—To effect it, therefore, within four-and-twenty

twenty hours seemed the only easy method of effecting it at all. Little preparation was necessary, and hardly any thing but secrecy indispensable. Night was already far advanced. He stole softly to the chamber of his wife, and perceived that care and long watching had at length buried her in a profound sleep. He kissed her, and might have exclaimed with Othello,

“Oh balmy breath! Almost thou dost persuade

“Justice to break her sword!”——

for justice, by a strange perversion of his better reason, he believed it, thus at once to punish the injurious suspicions of Michelli, and, by the most summary proceeding, attest his own honour. Morning at length appeared, and found his resolution fixed. He forgot his first fatal flight from his father; he forgot the instability of his own character; he forgot every thing that ought to have restrained him, and in evil hour he

turned his back upon the gates of Hamburg!

The Count had not, however, proceeded many leagues before tenderness and a more correct sense of equity began to struggle in his bosom. He half suspected his own measures of being precipitate: he was at least sure they admitted of misconstruction. He pictured to himself the overwhelming grief of Josephine, and even the silent consternation of her philosophic father.— Though unable to resolve on the humiliation of returning, he stopt at the nearest post town, and from thence wrote to his wife. All that language could convey, either tender or generous, was expressed in his letter. Most earnestly he conjured her to guard both her health and peace unimpaired till his return. He represented his absence to be such as he really hoped it would prove—beneficial and temporary. He com-  
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mitted their beloved boy to her wife and maternal protection, with fatherly fondness and unlimited confidence. It was their united claims he solemnly protested that he was now journeying to secure, and his own filial duties which though late, he was about to fulfil. He concluded with drawing a flattering picture of the affluence and felicity a reconciliation with his father would ensure their future lives : nor did he, now that the momentary resentment he had felt towards Michelli was partly subsided, omit to make that honourable mention of him to which, by his virtues and relative situation, he was entitled. Such was the letter of the Count ! Alas ! when language without being insincere grows thus eloquent, the exquisitely discerning heart too often traces in it only the overflowings of a conscience yet unfeared ; that thus compromises with itself, and spends the wholesome vigour of the



mind in exhausting and deceitful effusions of sensibility!—If such were the feelings of Josephine, obedience, that saddest or most sweet of duties, yet taught her to conceal them. She calmed her brow to Michelli: she took her son with aching fondness to that bosom her husband had deserted; and strove to find in rectitude and hope a balm for evils she saw no rational mode of remedying.

But whatever might be the sincerity of the Count in the tender professions he made his wife,—and in those he *was* sincere,—the reflections that writing naturally tended to produce had insensibly rendered him less sanguine as to the success of his own projects. Those reflections now told him, that from the moment he set foot in his native country he could no longer consider himself as a free agent; since even if his past transgressions did not render him

him amenable to that country, of which the crisis when he quitted it made him doubtful, he was at least certain that the limits of parental authority would be enlarged to the uttermost by that of the public: and to what, should his father prove inflexible, might not such authority extend?—to the tearing him for ever from Josephine and his son; to the violation of every tie either sacred or delightful; and the rendering him of necessity the very villain Michelli had more than half suspected he would prove. What plea had he to offer that might obviate these probable evils, or subdue at once the resentment of a father whom he had so long either neglected or defied?—simply the influence of his presence, and the weight of his promises: and now, for the first time, his self-love vanished before the idea of the former, and his self-delusion before that of the latter. At every pause

in his journey he looked back with more restless anxiety on those he had left, and forward to those he was approaching. Pride, honour, love, every thing dear to him, was included in the event; and where the stake is so mighty, he must be a daring adventurer indeed who trembles not to cast the die!—A circumstance wholly unlooked for, at once gave a new colour to his fate.

The Count's journey was of necessity tedious and indirect, as the horrors of war every where obstructed or followed him: his route, therefore, included the town to which he had requested that the answer he had flattered himself with receiving from his father, might, under a fictitious name, be addressed; but the channels of correspondence were at that period ever uncertain, except in great commercial cities: the state of the country rendered them still more so;  
and

and as near two years had elapsed from the time he had written, his inquiries, hitherto fruitless, now seemed almost irrational : yet that restlessness which still attends incertitude induced him to renew them. The postmaster paused a few moments; examined a small drawer that appeared full of discarded papers, and then, to his astonishment, produced a letter, the superscription of which he instantly knew to be the writing of his father. Could that father have seen the breathless impatience with which he tore it open, he would probably have fallen on his neck, and believed he had indeed found his son again. The date of the letter was not very far back, and the first lines of it expressed surprise at that of his own, which appeared to have been nearly lost, and very long retarded. A tender inference was, however, obviously to be drawn from the various precautions that seemed to have been taken to preserve the

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the answer from failing: it was written from the camp.

Count Siegendorf past over, in gentle, but dignified terms, that part of his son's letter on which he could not rely: but though he had, unhappily, little confidence in his professions, he spoke with sensibility of the returning consciousness of duty and honour which dictated them. He demanded, however, to be informed most explicitly of the nature and extent of the offences he was called upon to pardon. "The narrative," he observed—and the observation was not made without an expression of the most impassioned regret, "now included the events of years; but on his part he was prepared to temper the severity of a judge with the indulgence and patience of a father. As he was not aware of the reasons that had induced his son to change his name, he highly praised the delicacy

cacy that led him to renounce, rather than continue to disgrace it. He adverted in strong though broken starts of tenderness to the hour when that name might resume its first splendour ; but he peremptorily forbade him ever to appear in his native country till such an hour arrived. Finally he touched upon his son's pecuniary resources, and desired him to name the spot whither such remittances might be made, as his exigencies could not but require."

And now again the heart of the young man beat high with habitual self-applause and congratulation. Plunged as he had just before been in a gloom almost approaching to despondency, with a sensibility yet aching under the recent loss of all dear to him, and an imagination prompt to magnify every possible evil, he rushed at once into the contrary extreme. Far from seeing  
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ing in his father's letter what he justly might—a mind self-balanced, and prepared to make, if necessary, a desperate sacrifice to honour, he dwelt only on the tender passages of it; and believed he discerned in them a thousand struggling though half suppressed feelings, which his answer, for he answered it on the spot, would, he flattered himself, render unconquerable.

The enthusiasm of the moment could not but dictate more of promise than detail. He avowed, indeed, the circumstance of his marriage, and the birth of his son; and he was careful to satisfy the pride or the prejudices of the Count, by an assurance that the family from which Josephine sprang was such as did not attach disgrace to his own. The remainder of the letter consisted of a solemn asseveration of his sincerity; of the temperance and simplicity established in his modes of life; and

and of the unshaken fidelity with which he meant to fulfil all his engagements. The tenor of the whole was, indeed, well calculated to raise the hopes and expectations of a fond parent to the most sanguine pitch : it was dated from the spot on which it was written ; and he concluded by saying, that he should pursue his journey as far as Cassel, “ there to attend the further orders of his father, and to receive testimonies of his kindness in any way he should deem it suitable to offer them.”

The event which had thus intoxicated his heart remained to be related to Josephine. Ah why could he not press her to his bosom !—read in her eyes the sweet participation of his hopes, and communicate them by that intuitive and sympathetic power which leaves language so far behind ! He was sensible that the letter he addressed to her, though the honest effu-  
sion



sion of his own heart, was not such as could create unmixed pleasure in hers. The glaring colours with which his imagination painted the future, were calculated imperceptibly to throw into shade the retired and humble happiness of the past ; and, by a peculiarity with which he had tinged his own fate, he felt that he could not exult in the distinction he was to bestow, without involuntarily taking something from that he had received.

Refinements which are only the effect of capricious sensibility do not often produce much real disquiet. His, was “ the perfume and suppliance of a moment.” Again the awakened consciousness of youth and prosperity began to beat in every pulse. Nature, as he pursued his journey, seemed to have changed her aspect to him : the forms of pleasure floated indistinctly before his eyes ; and a tumultuous crowd of long-  
buried

buried sensations and habits revived in his bosom. In the security of receiving remittances from his father, he drew out of the hands of the banker at Hamburg that little provision lodged there for his wife and son. His pride loudly demanded an indemnification for the privations it had long undergone, and unfortunately it soon received one too ample. He had hardly presented himself at Cassel before he was recognized by several young men of his own rank and age for the son of Count Siegendorf; and as it was not doubted, from his appearance and expenditure, that he was licensed in the past, all the seductions of dissipation and bad example were held out in the present. A memorable period succeeded! — youth, habit, self-indulgence, again too fatally prevailed; — and the husband of Josephine, ten thousand times more criminal in that character than he had ever been before, relapsed into those vices  
which

which had already made a wreck of his honour and his peace. Amidst the excesses which now threatened finally to destroy both, he was even indiscreet enough to forget all the importance attached by his father to the renunciation of his name. He did not indeed formally resume it; but he was sufficiently willing that his rank should be understood; and it was too necessary a claim in the circle he mingled with, not to become generally so.

Four months rolled away in excesses which he persuaded himself were venial, as he was fully resolved the summons from his father should end them. Whenever that arrived, he solemnly promised his own heart to abjure all pleasure incongruous with his duties—to live only for Josephine and his family, and to limit his follies for ever. It was so long ere any intelligence reached him from Prague, that he almost began to doubt some  
second

second delay, more unexpected than the first, had attended his letter. The answer to it at length arrived, and his follies were, indeed, for ever limited ;—but, unhappily, by no forbearance or virtue of his own. Contrary to his expectation, the packet was addressed to him by the name and titles of his family ; as though the flaming indignation of his father disdained all concealment, and was willing to announce itself at the first glance.

Count Siegendorf, in the most pointed terms, and such as bespoke him well acquainted with all that was passing at Cassel, at once renounced a son to whom it was evident no promise was sacred ; “ who had flattered his hopes only the more grossly to betray them ; who had sported with the name of his family again to disgrace it ; who was alive to no feeling of duty, no principle of honour ; and whom



time and misfortune, far from reforming, had only taught duplicity." He enjoined him, as he valued his liberty, never again to venture within the limits of Bohemia, much less dare to appear in his presence. He concluded with saying, that, "worthless as he feared the scion might prove of such a stem, he was nevertheless willing to receive the little Conrad, and secure for him those claims he was born to, under the express condition that his parents should see him no more. That if they acceded to these terms, he would remit to his son an annual provision; but if otherwise, he disclaimed him for ever."

From the day this letter was received, the character and manners of the young Count seemed to undergo a total alteration. He believed himself grossly injured by his father, and he conceived a resentment likely to end but with the life of one of them.

them. His mind, untuned for pleasure, for ever revolted from it: he remained several weeks buried in meditation; at the expiration of that time he departed abruptly from Cassel, and wrote to Josephine to meet him, with Conrad, within a few leagues distance of Hamburg. The fate he had prepared for himself weighed heavily upon his soul, and seemed at once to have absorbed all its softer feelings: there was not justice enough in that soul to level the accusation where it ought to have fallen; and he regarded the event as unprecedented and intolerable. To remain for life only the son-in-law of Michelli was an idea that even his darkest contemplations had never presented to him; yet such was now the probable conclusion of his fate. The manner of his father's letter left him without a doubt that he would, if further irritated, execute the resolution he announced, and, vested with that power the states would

easily put into his hand against a son they did not esteem, make over the honours of the family to the collateral branch, which centred in Baron Stralenheim ; a native of Franconia, and nearly allied on the female side to the house of Siegendorf. The simple, but hateful, medium his father had proposed, could alone, therefore, stand between him and final ruin. But how was Josephine to encounter a blow every way thus cruel ? or how was a husband to relate to her the fatal consequence of his own accumulated indiscretions ? It is among the great evils of misconduct to harden the heart, and it had hardened that of the Count. Yet on this side he was not yet invulnerable. Another motive, however, even more urgent than any yet considered, impelled his decision. Circumstanced as he now found himself, it was not possible for him to replace that sum which, relying on the liberality of his father, he had imprudently lavished.

lavished. Yet that sum, lately deemed so insignificant, was mighty now in his account of life. For was he to return to Hamburg a poor dependant on the bounty of Michelli? Or could he become a hireling, and give to his wife and child the scanty bread of poverty? Misery—inevitable—intolerable misery, seemed to environ him on every side. But there was a point in his character at which it ever repelled the arrow from himself, though at the expense of all around; even now, in the very crisis of self-condemnation and shame, concentrating, as it were, to that point all the harsher and more stubborn feelings of his nature, he prepared to meet Josephine and Michelli with a firmness that should alike exclude expostulation or reproach, by showing that his decision, whatever it might prove, would be irrevocable, and that he would be responsible for his conduct to no being but himself.



He had only to see Josephine to be convinced that he might have chosen, if a more upright, yet a no less indulgent judge.—She, as well as Conrad, was in deep mourning, and he learnt, with that acute and unexpected pang which ever attends the death of those we believe we have injured, that Michelli was no more. He died as he had lived, in peace with his God and with mankind. Dismissing his resentment against the Count, he left him the sole goods he had to bequeath—his daughter, his pardon, and his blessing. In parting with Josephine, however, even the gentle and philosophic habits of his temper were almost inadequate towards supporting the firmness of either. To her bosom he had long since communicated all the pure and noble qualities of his own: he had nothing more to give!—they parted therefore as those who were to meet again, and to know each other by the sympathetic  
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influence of the virtues and affections.—The Count was not insensible to this short and simple detail : but it was now no season for indulging the softer sensibilities of life. With Michelli was buried the last hope of saving Josephine and her son from impending separation : for so desperate had been his own plans, that he had more than once thought of silently renouncing both, and, by plunging into a military career, however obscure, either save himself from the disgrace that seemed attached to existence, or the guilt of voluntarily ending it.

Again the tender influence of Josephine was employed in expelling the corrosive reflections that preyed upon the heart of her husband. Rising vigorously with the occasion, she endeavoured to recal both to his imagination and her own those brilliant pictures of the future he had himself once presented

to her. They were now, indeed, to be realised only in the person of their son; but would they be therefore less valued?—Conrad, removed from their protection, would be but the more dear to their affections! On her part she could resolve, with matron firmness, to resign him to a fate prosperous beyond what the cruelty of theirs allowed them to hope they could bestow; and if their own were less dazzling, she tenderly reminded her husband of those days when magnificence formed no part of their plan of happiness. The Count listened in silence: he strove to assent; he would willingly have concealed from every human being that he could not without reluctance resign, even to his son, that place in society he had in his own person so wantonly thrown away, nor give to his father a blessing of which he was to deprive himself. The mind of Josephine was too acute, however, not to discern the  
latent

latent rankling principle. But she buried the consciousness deeply in her own bosom, and with it all those afflicting sentiments the character and conduct of Siegendorf could not but create.—Conrad was something more than eight years of age, when he was at length delivered up to the care of his grandfather: the latter was punctual to his engagements; and though the income of the Count was moderate, it was such as supplied every demand, save that of luxury.

The career of dissipation now closed:—and so silent was the progress of life, that time and fate seemed stationary. Josephine could still indeed occasionally beguile the hours of her husband; but neither time, nor circumstance, nor love itself, ever restored to him his former character. He was habitually morose and abstracted; animal spirits and youth no longer danced through his veins,



veins, and he had no store of pleasurable ideas that should supply their place. Occupied in gloomy meditation, he turned his eyes incessantly back to the brilliant horizon of his early life, and murmured at the span to which it was contracted. The birth and growth of another son somewhat meliorated these feelings ; but, by a strange perverseness in his nature, the Count never loved Marcellin with the fondness he had shown for Conrad : while Josephine, on the contrary, seemed anxious to indemnify herself for the loss of one son by cherishing a double portion of fondness for the other. — The secret storm of the passions at length slowly subsided in the bosom of her husband ; who, fixed in his fate, fallen from his fortunes, soured to the present good, and, only at intervals stealing from her eyes that gleam of sunshine and of hope they ever communicated, presented to indifferent

ferent observers merely a common character and a common lot.

But though the years immediately succeeding that gloomy one which seemed to fix the fate of the Count passed thus apparently in abstraction and torpor, they were secretly marked by various transitions of sentiment and feeling. As the colours of the past became less vivid, his mind dwelt with more deep and intense contemplation on the prospect of the future. In the death of his father he still saw the probability, the almost certainty, of a change in his situation that could not but restore him to his natural rights, by leaving no other competitor for them than a son, whose tender age would ill calculate him for a contest. Count Siegendorf was now far advanced in life, and had never been vigorous: a day, an hour, therefore, might settle the great account between them—

but

but days and hours fly not according to the calculations of men!—insensibly they swelled into years, and brought with them no change. The young Count felt his confidence in the future diminish: that very circumstance which he dared hardly own to himself he desired, might no longer bring with it the security which alone could render it desirable! Years still continued to revolve, and the event of the future became daily more problematical. At length that proud and rebellious spirit which long forbade him to make any farther effort with his father, chiefly, perhaps, because he believed the authority of that father must soon inevitably terminate, gave way before the probability of its devolving to a son fast approaching to manhood. He contemplated with bitter and ceaseless regret the still increasing interval during which some favourable moment might doubtless have been found to soothe

foothie an indignation his forbearance had perpetuated, and recal to himself feelings now probably centred for ever in another object !

It had been among the voluntary engagements of Count Siegendorf, to inform Josephine and her husband if Conrad were either sick or dead.—No such intelligence ever reached them. He was well then !—he was great—perhaps happy !—No tender yearnings recalled the memory of his boyish days ! his parents were to him as nothing !—he made not any effort to see—to hear of them !—they languished in obscurity, and in a fondness that knew no fruition, while he revelled in every thing that fortune or fondness could bestow !—If these reflections corroded the heart of the father through a thousand avenues, they were not excluded even from the tender and generous one of Josephine. At a crisis  
when



when her husband's peace was at stake; she had, indeed, heroically dared to part with her son;—but to lose him for ever brought with it a pang that shook her utmost fortitude. For the first time in her life she envied Count Siegendorf; and, like her husband, looked with longing and anxious eyes towards that only spot whence both were alike excluded.

During the latter years of the Count's residence at Hamburg, it was among his additional grievances that the man whose name had been held forward to him on an occasion he could never remember without bitterness of spirit, had taken up his abode in that neighbourhood. Baron Strahlenheim he had reason to know was the person formerly deputed by his father to watch over his actions, and restrain them, if possible, by the hand of authority. Years had passed since that time, and there was no reason

reason to suppose that Stralenheim had any longer an influence over his fate. But the resentment and disdain once conceived against the latter ever engendered a deep distrust in the mind of the Count. No two beings on earth could seem however more distinct from each other than they now appeared to be. The Count had never since the period of his marriage, and even some months preceding it, borne his own name—the fatal period excepted he had past so indiscreetly at Cassel, where, though he claimed it not, it was generally given him. He was not sure that the Baron knew his assumed one; and certainly the residence of the latter at Hamburg seemed to have no reference to his: yet it was singular that he should reside there! the circumstance of his doing so, for he was a man of stately and reserved habits, came to the Count's ear by what nevertheless appeared a mere accident.

In

In the household of the Baron there was an Italian of the name of Giulio; a Piedmontese, who had resided many years at Hamburg during the life of Michelli; and though in an obscure situation, and not precisely of the same country with the latter, yet, being a man of ingenuity, was very well known to him. Josephine, to whom every one was in some degree dear that recalled the memory of her father, never failed to notice Giulio when he fell in her way; and when that did not happen, a sentiment of grateful respect induced him sometimes to inquire after her. On this man the Count had fixed a suspicious eye; but he saw him very rarely, and nothing appeared in his conduct to justify the idea of his being a spy.

The strange and inexplicable feeling which superstition terms presentiment was nevertheless singularly allied to reality  
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in the case of the Count. The residence of Baron Stralenheim had in fact that very reference to his which he suspected; and could he indeed have looked into the future, he would have known the latter to be of all existing beings the one most portentous to his future life! Of this they were alike ignorant: nor was it possible either should yet suspect the dark shadow they were mutually to cast over each other's fate! Giulio was nevertheless no instrument in the hands of the Baron, who was even unsuspicious of the opportunity that offered of making him such. Stralenheim was a man of a phlegmatic character, and a narrow mind. He had spent one half of his life in the service, because fortune had placed him there; but he had no taste for glory; and he had retired to spend the remainder in the country, with as little taste for that. He loved, however, the petty dignity attached to his family and alliances; and surveyed



with much satisfaction a gothic château situated in a marsh, and flanked with avenues of worm-eaten timber, because its precincts were his own.

From this dream of solitary and insignificant grandeur he had been suddenly waked some years before by a remote expectation of the inheritance of Siegendorf: the magnitude of the object was such as might have roused a more torpid mind; and it accorded too well with the propensities of his, not to call forth all his attention. His hopes had, however, been frustrated before they could reasonably be called such. The Count, ever indulgently leaning towards his son, had almost instantaneously repented the measures dictated by temporary resentment, and had therefore withdrawn, as he believed, from the hands of Stralenheim all power of injuring him. But Stralenheim was a man of cold

and deliberate purpose: not easily kindled to pursuit, but tenacious of his object; and as he perceived the Count to be wholly devoid of suspicion respecting him, he had address enough craftily to retain the power, though he could not calculate exactly when or how he should use it. The adoption of Conrad had appeared a far more fatal blow to his hopes than any reconciliation with Conrad's father: yet even this did not wholly extinguish them; for he was of a temperament that enabled them to be permanent, without being active. Imposing on himself, therefore, just as much restraint as should keep him within the sphere of the Count, whose assumed name was the very one that exposed him to danger, Stralenheim waited patiently the slow aid of time and occasion.—Such was the enemy that hung over the head of the unhappy Siegendorf! an avenging instrument, as it seemed, in the hand of Heaven,

ready forcibly to impel the scale of misery, whenever error or misfortune should drop their weight into the balance.—An event that had nothing to do with the calculations of either party seemed precisely at this period on the point of overturning those of both.

Twelve years had rolled away since the departure of Conrad. The income of the Count had been regularly paid in that interval; and as he relied on its increase whenever his father died, either by the accession of himself or his son, the caution of Josephine had never been able to prevent his expending it even improvidently. With a feeling that partook at once of incredulity and amazement, he learnt that it was no longer to be remitted to him. His father then was dead!—Ah no!—the prohibition was signed by his hand. The eyes of the distracted son perused the billet, and  
his

his memory too well authenticated the writing. That cruel fever which afterwards was incorporated with his constitution seized at once upon his pulse—his brain—his heart! long and painful was the struggle between life and death—but the vigor of constitution prevailed: he at length recovered, and found himself almost a beggar! An act of cruelty so extravagant as that of impoverishing an only son, could not, however, be without a motive. No excesses had now disgraced the tenor of his life, no arrogant assumption of name that of his family. At a crisis when the bitterness of despair had nearly overwhelmed Josephine, these considerations had nevertheless inspired her with fortitude enough to take the only step that could avert it. Blending the dignity of her natural character with the sensibilities of a wife and a mother, she ventured, in language rendered exquisitely touching by the occasion, to



address that respected father-in-law whom she had yet never seen. She wrote also to her son.

The fullen despondency which first seized the Count on his recovery, yet yielded to a feeble impression of hope on learning the measures pursued by his wife. He consented to live; but his imagination bounded the term of life, though he refused it not as a temporary gift. As yet, indeed, he believed it to be an uncertain one, from the mere languor and feebleness which succeeded indisposition. He was dozing one evening on a small couch Josephine had drawn for him to the fireside, when, roused by an indistinct murmur of voices, he raised his eyes, and perceived she was talking with a man in the ante-room. A second glance showed him it was Giulio. Agitated by that association of ideas which had long haunted him with respect to the latter,

latter, he inquired his business; the man was abashed; the languid air of Josephine, so different from that which was habitual to her, had already inspired in him an embarrassment common to timid and uncourtly minds, not accustomed to set the feelings of others at defiance: he was conscious of intrusion, and, in a voice of apology, explained his errand: it was simply to inform Josephine that he was on the point of returning to Italy; to inquire if she had any thing that demanded his service there; and modestly to request, as a token of her regard, a few mathematical instruments of little value, that had been made by Michelli. Again the Count was struck as with some inexplicable relation to his own fate in so sudden and unexpected a departure.

“For what reason,” he asked, “did Giulio, at that crisis, quit Hamburgh?”

“ Baron Stralenheim had dismissed his household, and was about to undertake a long journey.”—Josephine found the self-possession her husband wanted, and inquired, though not without some emotion—“ Whither?”

“ He was not quite certain; he believed it was to Prague; he was at least sure it was as far as Bohemia.”—The silence that followed this reply was unnoticed by Giulio, who saw in the questions put to him nothing but a condescending civility that strove to efface the coldness of his first reception; it was his part, he conceived, to show that he felt it so, by prolonging the conversation.

“ Baron Stralenheim,” he continued, “ is neither very communicative nor very generous. Were he the latter, he would probably not dismiss his suite: for he is  
going,

going, I am told, to take possession of the rich inheritance of count Siegendorf."

"Siegendorf is alive!" exclaimed the agitated Count, in a voice he found it impossible to controul.

"At least—his grandson," added Josephine; and she too faltered, struck with a thousand painful recollections; and with the cruel possibility of even that being a doubt.

"The Count himself unquestionably is dead," replied Giulio: "the Baron seems to think little of the claims of his grandson, whose legitimacy he says is dubious; the inheritance is at least worth a struggle—and he is not, therefore, the man to part with it."

To the heart and imagination of the Count and his wife these few words summed  
up



up the history of years ; perhaps of all that remained to them in existence : they touched at length, then, the final point at which they were to stand or fall ; and how did it find them provided for the contest ?—sick—miserable—impoverished !—blighted, as it appeared, by a father's dying curse—since his last cruel prohibition was hardly less ; and uncherished by that only being on whom they could rest a hope. For what was become of Conrad ? why did he not now seek them ? was he the victim of some secret machination on the part of Stralenheim ? or was he revelling in the inheritance of his father, and unconscious of the storm that impended over himself ?—Whatever might be his fate, his character, or his sentiments, it was at least evident that his parents were as necessary to his future welfare as he could be to theirs : since what besides their personal appearance could legitimate his birth against the claims

of a crafty and powerful competitor? One only doubt invalidated the importance of these mighty questions; and that doubt was quickly removed, for a very short inquiry authenticated to the Count the intelligence of his father's death—Giulio having received all his information on the subject from Stralenheim's secretary, who had himself read the letter from Prague that announced it.

In the tumult of contending hopes, fears, and sorrow, that naturally took possession of the bosoms of Josephine and her husband at a crisis thus important, it afforded at least a gleam of satisfaction to the latter to perceive by the open communication of Giulio, and the surprise as well as interest he expressed on finding his hearers somehow implicated in it, that his visits had certainly no connection with any project entertained by Stralenheim: the latter, therefore,

therefore, it was possible, might be wholly ignorant in whose neighbourhood he dwelt ; it was highly to be desired that he should remain so : Giulio was therefore strictly cautioned on the subject ; and, as the immediate departure of the Count and his wife seemed the only step likely to ascertain their security or rights in life, it became necessary to consider by what means the journey could be undertaken. Bitterly did the Count now lament his own habitual extravagance, and his reliance on a future that had so often deceived him, when he felt that it had robbed him of those supplies which on the present occasion were absolutely indispensable, and, united with his sickness, had left him worse than poor. The sole method that presented itself of providing for the expenses of a long and dangerous journey was by parting with every valuable they possessed : in so doing they made, indeed, no great sacrifice, for they possessed

possessed nothing that they believed would be henceforward either necessary or useful to them ; but the manner in which the business was to be transacted was a circumstance of far more difficulty than the business itself ; and in this they had again recourse to Giulio, whose condition and modes of life rendered his personal service no degradation. Through his means they privately converted, though to a great disadvantage, every thing that could be easily disposed of into money ; after which, taking such precautions as might enable them to appear like travellers in an humble, but decent rank of life, the Count and Josephine at length turned their steps towards Bohemia.

In the Palatinate and Upper Saxony war raged with a fury the effects of which were not to be calculated : and though Swedish and other troops covered the north, they



they were less hostile, and, not being actuated by civil discord, less bloody than elsewhere. No method, therefore, of reaching Bohemia appeared so certain as that of passing into Silesia; which, for the most part, united in the same cause with the latter, and at all times strongly incorporated in its policy and views, afforded the safest passage to emigrants of different descriptions. The Count was, on the whole, sufficiently acquainted with the country; and, though yet feeble, and ill able to sustain a journey of such extent, he was not less impelled by the necessity of the occasion to undertake it, than invigorated by the persuasion that his suspicions with regard to Stralenheim had been those of an irritable mind; and that, in reality, the latter neither knew him under his assumed name, nor kept any watch over his footsteps.

The security in which the Count believed

lieved himself was, nevertheless, the precursor of danger. Stralenheim was informed of every material step taken by the former; and he was well pleased to see him quit Hamburgh, where it would have been difficult, if not dangerous, to make any attack upon his personal freedom without the most unquestionable authority: whereas, in the insignificant towns through which he must necessarily travel, that with which the Baron had armed himself might, by the power of gold, be made to act in full force: and as it was particularly authentic within the territories of the House of Brandenburg, it was the purpose of Stralenheim to attack him near some fortress within that limit; where, being himself a military man, he did not doubt but he should find such connivance as might enable him, if not to effect the Count's confinement for life, at least to secure him for a period

a period sufficiently long to give his adversary every advantage he could desire.

Ingenious as craft may be, it is perhaps never so much in danger of being defeated as when it encounters the suspicious timidity which results from a consciousness of error and a premature knowledge of life. The Count, throughout the progress of his journey, had little else to do but to think and to consider. A singularity that occasionally marked the interrogations put to him, together with the observing the countenance of an individual who had crossed him more than once, again awakened the latent jealousy of his nature. He had too much at stake, and was become habitually too profoundly meditative, not to guard against the remotest danger, except such as was merely personal and accidental, to which he was ever indifferent.

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That he now looked to was of a more important nature : he could not, indeed, ascertain that there was any ; but he suspected it,—and to suspect it was enough. At a point of his journey, therefore, when a deviation from it could least be guessed at, he suddenly struck through the bye-roads of a forest, once more changed his name to that of Kruitznor, and felt assured that he had, for a time at least, escaped all pursuit. Here, however, ended his good fortune. The way he had taken was circuitous and fatiguing ; his health was again attacked ; his little means daily diminished ; subsistence, hope, life itself, seemed hourly fading from his grasp, and he was set down in the obscure shelter afforded him by his host at M——, with only the last lingering sparks of either remaining.

Afflicting as his fate there continued to be, yet in his calculations with regard to



the Baron he had fortunately not been deceived: the route he had taken was one through which the latter had neither directed his inquiries nor his measures; but Stralenheim, though foiled, was not easily defeated: he well knew the Count's method of travelling was too humble and economical to carry him further than certain regular distances, and on this he had reckoned even at the time of his own departure from Hamburgh; for though he had not quitted that city till several days after his competitor, of the rapidity of whose proceedings he had not been sufficiently aware, he was convinced that the influence of money would bring him soon within track, and enable him to be near enough to enforce his measures whenever he judged it prudent to set them in motion. In this, however, the Baron made a false estimate of his own character; for he was not generous; neither, though persevering, was he

he active: his journey, therefore, was not pursued with the celerity he expected; and though he had sufficient reason to know he kept his object in view, he did not come up with him. The address with which the Count changed his name and route, arrested the progress of the Baron, who was then at Frankfort. It was of the first importance to him that the immediate heir to the estates of Siegendorf should be prevented, for a time at least, from appearing on his patrimonial lands, either to assert his own claims or establish the validity of his son's: if, therefore, he had wholly escaped the Baron, the journey of the latter was useless, and afforded too little ground of hope to induce him to continue it; since the inheritance it might be easy for him to take possession of, it would be impossible to recover. To these considerations all others gave way, and Stralenheim necessarily remained stationary till tidings of the fugitives should reach him.

Confused accounts of persons answering to the description of those sought, though differing in name and other trifling particulars, seemed at length to ascertain that the Count and his family were within a certain limit. Had the Baron been profuse of his rewards, he would probably have traced the precise spot; but as those rewards chiefly consisted of promises, few of his emissaries imparted more than half of the little they knew; some because they had cunning enough to foresee they might sell their discoveries to more advantage by degrees, and others because their avarice was not awakened by the hope of any advantage at all. Of the former description were the junto at M——; but Stralenheim had learnt enough to be assured his victim could not be far off. Preparing, therefore, without remorse, to authenticate by every specious form of justice the severity of his proceedings, he resolved to secure his

his person on the first possible opportunity ; and he persuaded himself this could be done with more perfect facility, as the order announced no hereditary distinction or title of the Count ; but, noting him simply by the name he had borne at Hamburgh, left him not the little chance of profiting by an attention almost invariably shown to rank.

The season, however, was daily less favourable to the increasing impatience of Stralenheim. The frost had been succeeded by a rapid thaw : the Oder overflowed its banks, and the smaller rivers that discharged into it had carried away their bridges. There were still here and there, fords, over which the peasants indeed ventured to pass ; but it was not seldom that even they found the undertaking both difficult and dangerous. To all remonstrances on that subject, however, the Ba-



ron was insensible: the life of a soldier had habituated him to hazards of every kind; and he believed that he had only to add more horses to his carriage, and take other trifling precautions, to ascertain his safety. The postillions, in obedience to his command, plunged, though with reluctance, into the stream, and it was soon obvious that they had not exaggerated the danger. The horses, as well as those who guided them, nevertheless, struggled vigorously against it, and at length succeeded in reaching the opposite shore; but the force of the current had hurried them beyond the precise track: the bank to which they approached was steep and dangerous; it was, besides, undermined by the violence of the flood: in the effort of climbing it the ground gave way,—the horses lost their feet,—the weight of the carriage impelled it violently backwards,—it overset,—and all the hopes, views, and schemes of the

Baron,

Baron, were on the point of terminating for ever.

Two strangers, who had but lately gained the shore, were witnesses of the scene, and, perceiving the danger to be imminent, plunged, with some hazard to themselves, into the water. The last effort of the Baron, on perceiving his situation, was to open the carriage-door, and attempt to throw himself out. He had so far succeeded, that his rescue was accomplished with less difficulty than it otherwise would have been; and though he was to all appearance lifeless, the assistance given by the strangers was not vain. Many peasants also now hastened in aid of the latter; and by their united efforts, not only Stralenheim, but his attendants and baggage, were preserved from the stream. He was conveyed to a habitation not far distant, and every attention shown him the

stances of the time and place admitted. Once more restored to the consciousness of what was passing around, he became sufficiently convinced of his own rashness to be grateful to those who had preserved him from its effects. They were travellers like himself, and, like himself, somewhat too daring ; for their own situation, a few moments before, had been little less critical than his. One of them announced himself an Hungarian ; the other a native Saxon. The appearance and manners of each, especially those of the latter, bespoke him above the vulgar rank ; and the Baron surmised they might both probably be Austrians, who, from motives of justifiable prudence, forbore to avow themselves as such. The danger they had so gallantly encountered in favour of a stranger loudly demanded his gratitude ; and as he found, on inquiry, that their journey was nearly in the same direction with his

own,

own, the most useful and obliging mode of testifying it was to provide for the general safety by making them his associates, at least till such time as the subsiding of the waters should secure either party from future difficulties. After a moment's hesitation the strangers accepted the proposal.

The Baron, however, in escaping the stream, had not escaped all the consequences of his plunge there. Violent feverish symptoms announced the probability of future suffering. The house to which he had been dragged afforded no accommodation or comfort to alleviate it. He recollected, precisely at this juncture, that he was within the estates, and not far from the palace, of the Prince de T——, under whom he had served; nor did he hesitate to profit by the occasion. His name, though not his person, was known to the

Intendant



Intendant at M——; the rank he announced secured his reception, and thus, at length, without any previous plan or knowledge on his own part, was the Baron set down within three hundred yards of the man he had travelled so many leagues in search of. Thus, too, were the misfortunes of the unhappy Count brought to a climax, when the name of all others most hateful to him dropped from the lips of the innocent Marcellin; and when the report of Idenstein confirmed the alarming intelligence that “*the stranger* arrived in the Prince’s coach at the palace” was no other than *Baron Stralenheim*.

The singular coincidence of circumstances that brought the latter thither could neither be known nor guessed at by the Count. Stralenheim, so lately at Hamburg, now close upon him in a devious road, was but too rational a confirmation of  
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of all his former suspicions. That the Baron sought him he could no longer doubt: whether he knew he had found him he was yet to learn; but that his own departure, if it was to be accomplished at all, must be undertaken immediately, even under the miserable circumstances of performing it on foot, could not but be certain. From the long and deep meditation, into which he had been plunged after Idenstein quitted him, he was first roused by the timid embrace of Marcellin, whom his mother had sent to take leave of him for the night. Siegendorf, who felt the cruel probability of its being for ever, strained the boy to his bosom with a melting fondness he was not in the habit of testifying; while the child, who feared that he had in some way innocently transgressed, lavished caresses on his father that almost looked like presentiment. Josephine herself did not enter:

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she knew the temper of her husband ever disposed him to indulge the first bitterness of his feelings in solitude ; and if she did not sympathise with, she at least had habituated herself to respect that proud sentiment which forbade him to unveil the secret recesses of his heart even to her. She was besides willing to free both, before they again met, from the interference or observation of the child. Siegendorf continued to listen to the voice of the latter, as it reached him from the further room, till the sounds died away ; when lifting his eyes from the fire, on the embers of which they had been long fixed, he saw the moon had already risen. She was to be the sad and solitary witness of his intended journey. He could neither resolve to take leave of Josephine, nor to depart without doing so ; and rather from a mechanical desire of motion than any settled plan, he walked out of the house.

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The night was cold—a bleak and boisterous north wind had arisen, and impelled volumes of dark clouds rapidly across the sky. He turned towards the high road, which was at the extremity of the garden-wall, whence it sank into a woody hollow, at that hour peculiarly sombre. It suited his frame of mind, and he pursued it for somewhat more than a quarter of a mile, when the wood shelving away on both sides presented the open country, and presented at the same moment, to the great surprise of the Count, a view of that inundation with which the late rains had covered it—the whole landscape seeming to form a sheet of water, over which the moon-beams played with a radiance that at once ascertained the fact.—To her friendly light he was evidently indebted for his safety, if not his life!—but his mind was not in a tone so to consider the dispensation. He turned sullenly back, and, continuing



ning his walk round the wild and lonely outskirts of the town, came at length within reach of the hum of men.—It was hateful to his ear. His eye involuntarily glanced towards the palace. Many of the apartments had lights in them, and throughout the whole there was an air of unusual festivity and mirth. “I also lived in Arcadia\*,” murmured the Count, as he traversed the streets, impatient to hide himself from every human eye. Contrary to what was usual they contained many idlers, who were passing home, or elsewhere; and from their talk, as they crossed him, he learnt that

\* Il y a un paysage de Pouffin où l’on voit de jeunes bergères qui dansent au son du chalumeau : et, à l’écart, un tombeau, avec cette inscription, “Je vivois aussi dans la délicieuse Arcadie !”

DIDEROT, *sur la Poésie Dramatique.*

A landscape of Pouffin’s represents a groupe of shepherdesses dancing to the music of the pipe. In the background is seen a tomb, with this inscription, “I also lived amid the delights of Arcadia !”

DIDEROT, *upon Dramatic Poetry.*

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the Intendant had, by the command of the Baron, ordered dancing and a supper. Siegendorf was not more than five hundred yards from his own abode, when he was rudely jostled by a man who passed him; and turning round he perceived it was Idenstein. In the humour the Count felt himself, life, though it were his own, or that of any other human being, was vile in his eyes;—but he secretly despised Idenstein, and judged his own personal strength to be so much the superior of the two, that he hardly deigned to resent what he nevertheless suspected to be an insult. He only stooped, and asked Idenstein, “If he knew him?”—

“I can't tell any body that does, Mr. *Kruitznor*, except, indeed, it may be *one*!” returned Idenstein with a marked and insolent sneer. The tone in which he spoke, together with his general appearance,

ance, convinced the Count that what he had considered as an insult might as probably be the effect of inebriety: But who was the *one* that knew him? there was something in the words too accordant with the chain of the hearer's thoughts to escape his attention. He nevertheless walked on in silence, though he perceived that Idenstein still kept by his side, and, in a voice of intoxication, continued to mutter something, like a man who is confusedly pursuing the thread of his own ideas.

“The question may as well be settled here,” said he, at length, laying his hand somewhat roughly on the arm of the Count. The latter raised his eyes, and perceived they were precisely opposite one entrance of the palace.

“What question may be settled?” replied he, fiercely shaking Idenstein off.

“Whe-

“Whether you are really the man Baron Strahlenheim is in search of, or not!”

The indignant Count, now driven alike beyond all measure of patience or of prudence, and believing, from the motion of Idenstein, that he intended again to lay hands on him, seized the latter forcibly by the collar, and, throwing him with no little violence from him, saw him fall at his length on the pavement: What injury was likely to be the consequence he neither knew nor cared; but before he closed his own door, he perceived more than one person issue from that of the palace, and, by the moonlight, believed he distinguished the Intendant to be amongst them.

The wildness and abruptness with which Siegendorf entered, alarmed Josephine even more than his absence had done. Hardly had he indistinctly, and in few words, given



her to understand the cause of both, when they heard the street-door open, which the Count had not had the precaution to secure, and the voices of Idenstein and the Intendant, apparently loud and threatening, below. Frantic with passion, the Count looked wildly around him for some weapon of defence: he believed himself on the point of suffering personal indignity, and every gleam of reason or of prudence vanished before the idea. The distracted Josephine conjured—implored him to retreat before the storm. In the last moment of desperation his eye glanced upon a large and sharp knife which lay on the table near, and with which she had been cutting bread for the child's supper. Siegendorf seized it with an earnest grasp, as if with it he had seized his fate: then pausing irresolutely for a moment, he at length turned from the door towards which he had advanced, and past abruptly through another  
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in the opposite direction:—not less determined than before, but like a man who feeling he has power in his hands, is become less desperate.

Idenstein and the Intendant staggered in almost on the instant, both evidently in a state of intoxication; and Josephine, who a few moments before thought she could have encountered a host, turned pale and faint before the image of brutality. The violence of her emotion, however, presently subsided, when she discovered the Intendant to be in fact only boisterously merry; and that the purport of the visit, as far as either party could make themselves understood, was to reconcile the difference between Idenstein and her husband. Vehemently did she now long to recal the latter—to dissipate the phrensy of his mind by convincing him that what had lately past was a mere frolic of intoxication, and

to restore to it that balmy hope which seemed to have fled the mansion. It was impossible, however, to venture upon a step thus dangerous and delicate; and she found herself fortunate beyond her expectations in being able to soothe the beings before her into temporary quietness, and finally to retreat.

Her gentle voice then prepared to tranquillise the bosom of her husband, and she trod in search of him with a light and rapid step along the apartments. They were dark and solitary! She then concluded he had quitted them through some of the various detached doors—all, however, were closed, and, as usual, slightly secured!—A wonder, vague—undefined—alarming, seized upon her, and she hastily passed forward through the house, but Siegendorf was no where to be seen in it. An open window, at length, attracted her notice, with

with some heavy furniture near, by which, though the casement was high, it might be reached. She could not with certainty recollect whether she had closed it, as was her custom towards evening, and with an anxious eye she surveyed its exterior distance from the ground: the descent was dangerous in the extreme, but it was not wholly impracticable; and the cruel apprehension that Siegendorf, impelled by the agitation of the moment, had accomplished his meditated purpose, and really departed for Bohemia, at once assailed her. Even this, however, became now the least of her terrors: the deep abstraction and gloom in which he had been plunged throughout the evening—the phrensy of rage that seemed to have succeeded it—the fever which she well knew beat in his pulse—and the actual hopelessness of his fate, armed, as he unhappily was, with the means of ending it, all united to inspire her



with the most gloomy forebodings. Every hideous form of suicide presented itself to her imagination: she rushed breathless through the apartments, starting as she entered each, with the expectation of what it would present to her, yet impatient to explore the next. In the irritated state of her nerves and spirits, strange phantoms began to swim before her eyes, and unreal voices sounded in her ears; incapable, at length, of further struggle, she returned to the chamber of Marcellin, whom her agony and terrors had awakened; and laying her wan cheek against the rosy one of her child, lost all consciousness of suffering in temporary insensibility.

For what period of time this lasted Josephine was unable to ascertain: but she was not yet sensible to the pulsation of returning life, when the sound of her own name seemed

ed to recal it ; she opened her eyes—the boy, supposing her asleep, had again sunk into slumber in her arms, but the flashing and uncertain blaze of a candle, now burning in its socket, showed her husband standing by the bedside. He might well have been mistaken for one of those forms of suicide her imagination had painted : his eyes had lost the fury which lately animated them—his cheek was wholly colourless, as though the blood had indeed “ all descended to the labouring heart : ”—in one hand he held the knife which had been the chief source of her terrors ; the other was prest forcibly within his bosom. Josephine attempted to offer him hers : he laid down the knife, folded his arm gently round her, and, drawing her towards him, related in a low and smothered voice the story of his absence.—It was, alas ! little calculated to remove from her heart the horrible weight with which it was oppressed !

Siegenderdorf, in rushing so hastily from an encounter with those whose blood he secretly feared he should bring upon his head, had retreated to the last apartment of the range—it was a chamber: here he made a desperate stand, and, placing himself against the wainscot, prepared to plunge his knife deliberately, though not without warning, into the bosom of the first man who should attempt to lay hands on him; the vigour with which he prest against that which supported him, suddenly caused it to give way; he looked round with surprise, and perceived it was not an accident, but the effect of some spring which he either touched or stood upon. It was no moment for deliberation!—he past hastily through the aperture, and, without considering how he should return, closed the pannel. He was immediately involved in total darkness: his extended arms, however, informed him, as his eye had indistinctly

strictly done, that he was in a gallery of no considerable width; floored, perfectly dry, and, as he believed, carpeted: the strangeness of the event filled his mind with painful curiosity, and he continued to advance more rapidly than in a cooler moment he probably would have ventured to do. Suddenly the ground, by some extraordinary impulse, seemed to shake beneath his feet; but before he had leisure to question the cause, it announced itself—for confused sounds of distant conviviality burst upon his ear, and snatches of music assured him he was in the neighbourhood of dancers. The mystery was solved at once: it was clear that, having traversed the house which immediately adjoined to his own, he had reached the interior of the palace; and the various stories related of the Countess and the Prince passed in a moment across his recollection with the force of authenticity. While he continued



nued to think, the sounds died away—he left them behind him, and found he touched the extremity of the passage. The spring, invisible on one side, was palpable at once on the other; encouraged by profound silence, he gently prest it, and found himself precisely where the previous calculation of a moment would have told him he would find himself—in the state chamber of the palace, and the bed-room of Baron Stralenheim!

Astonishment, approaching to stupor, chained up the faculties of Siegendorf; yet an instinctive impulse of self-preservation made him grasp with ferocious boldness the knife he still held. The apartment was extremely spacious, and magnificently hung: a bed of purple velvet, fringed with silver, stood under a canopied recess on one side; on the other was a cabinet of curious wood, ornamented with precious

precious stones, and richly-mounted : lighted tapers were placed near, and letters, as well as other papers, confusedly scattered over it ; but the object which at once arrested the attention of the Count was several rouleaus of gold that lay ranged beside them.—Lastly, near the fire, abhorred by his eyes, and now fearful indeed to his imagination, was Stralenheim himself, stretched in an easy chair, and buried in a deep sleep.

The dæmons of desperation and cupidity seized at once upon their victim in every form of temptation ingenuity could devise. Poverty—insult—a dungeon !—a despoiled inheritance—a helpless child, and a despairing wife, passed in gloomy perspective before him. How should he, who had never known what it was to contend with one imperious wish, now stem the torrent of all ? He believed it almost a duty to free himself,

himself, for the sake even of others, from the abject penury under which he was groaning.—His hand was on the gold, when Stralenheim moved. Siegendorf fiercely raised the knife—happily the motion of the Baron brought with it no consciousness—he merely turned his face from the light which incommoded him. The Count, after gazing on him for a moment, hastily thrust into his bosom that portion of the gold which was nearest:—retreated—closed the door—and, in the dreadful perturbation and disgrace of the occasion, breathed out an imperfect ejaculation to that God who had providentially saved him from being a murderer!

This was no tale of comfort to the ear or the heart of Josephine! It brought too close to the latter that afflicting doubt she had so often banished from it—on what point of her husband's character she could finally

finally depend ! She saw him driven from error to error—from temptation to temptation—still yielding—still repenting—and where would be the last ? Sacrificing every thing by turns, either to false calculations, or ungoverned passions : his father—his wife—even his honor ! at least that pure and secret sense which seemed to her its essence. Murder had already become amongst the almost inevitable temptations of his fate !—She ventured not to pause upon the ideas which thus irresistibly forced themselves upon her mind. Other considerations, far subordinate indeed, but sufficiently important in their nature, were open to the observation of both.—Of what use was the gold thus dangerously and unjustly acquired ?—It could not extricate them from their entanglements at M—— ; it could not even be offered to Idenstein !—it could buy them nothing !—it could obtain them nothing !—It was as dross in their hands—



hands—or even worse—since, but to be suspected of possessing, it would bring forth at once accusation and proof! would throw them inevitably and disgracefully into the power of Stralenheim, and give to his most vindictive measures the sanction of law—alas! almost that of justice!—These, and similar considerations, had, in the tumult of his thoughts, wholly escaped the attention of the Count. In possessing himself of gold, he had, for the moment, believed he had possessed himself of every thing:—but it was not so!—so far otherwise, that he felt he could not purchase his liberation, even though he were to make the last humiliating sacrifice of every manly principle. Dissimulation, falsehood itself, would be of no avail towards accomplishing that purpose. Though his real condition in life was an enigma, it was well known that he could have no resources at M——, and the only shadow of deceit he could have employed

ployed was precluded effectually by the Argus-like watch of Weilburg, who would be assured he had received no remittances by letter. The Count then, far from having palliated even the obvious and coarser evils of his fate, had, in fact, only added to them; since the flight his poverty did but threaten to impede, his newly-acquired wealth forbade him to attempt. For what,—should suspicion be awakened,—might in his absence be the probable fate of his wife and child?

In reflections like these the little that remained of night soon fled away, and morning brought with it appropriate fears and sorrows: for now Idenstein might again obtrude upon them! That he was an instrument in the hands of the Baron his own wanton insolence had effectually testified; and that he could be formidable without that circumstance they too well knew.

The

The senses and the heart of Siegendorf seemed at length, however, dull to apprehension of every kind. He resigned himself with a sort of sullen despondency to his fate; and if his pulse underwent any change on hearing the voice of the Intendant, his countenance did not announce it.

The Intendant himself was languid and heavy with the excesses of the preceding evening: it was evident, nevertheless, that he came to observe and to scrutinise, though he strove to veil the intention. A few moments' conversation was sufficient to convince both the Count and Josephine that their visitor knew nothing of what had passed in the chamber of Stralenheim, who, finding himself unusually ill the night before, had taken a large quantity of laudanum, and was not yet stirring. The observations of the Intendant, therefore, went  
only

only to the same point with those of Idenstein : both were now fully persuaded that Kruitznor and his wife were the parties sought by Stralenheim, and each equally desirous to know the value of the secret before he finally parted with it to his employer : nor was the Intendant without a curiosity to discover—what he perceived the policy of the Baron had hitherto studiously withheld—the names and condition of his intended victims. His visit, therefore, was long, wearisome, and, as is often the case with such visits as mean every thing, seemed to mean nothing. It obtained him no information ; and he at length retired, as little satisfied with it as those had been to whom it was made. Neither the Count nor Josephine, however, heard without a silent sense of self-congratulation, that Idenstein suffered so severely from the effects of intemperance



as to leave no probability of his quitting his chamber till late.

The departure of the Intendant seemed to promise a momentary respite of persecution:—but the hope was illusive.—A voice to which they were not familiar, heard in parley with Marcellin, attracted the attention of the Count and his wife soon after their guest had quitted them: the child ran hastily into the room, and announced a stranger, who enquired for the Intendant. Siegendorf advanced with no less rapidity: his soul seemed to forebode that it was Stralenheim, and to dare the encounter. The stranger on his part either supposing the child did not understand him, or that the rank of the persons on whom he intruded dispensed with ceremony, entered almost at the same moment.—He was a much younger man, however, than

Stral-

Stralenheim, and of a more noble appearance. His eye fell first on Josephine:—He paused—looked earnestly at her, and from her to the Count; repeating, not without hesitation, the question he had before asked:—faintly was it replied to; for almost before the sounds could escape on either side, the eyes and palpitating hearts of each present had asked and answered a question far more important! Josephine and her husband believed it possible they might mistake—but the stranger did not doubt! he knew, and in a moment recognised his parents!—It was Conrad!

With a burst of agonising joy the mother threw herself into his arms, nor did Siegen-dorf feel less acutely the sudden and inexplicable throb of nature, increased too as it was by every circumstance of time or place that could add to it.—To have found him! found that son so long and so anxiously

wished for! and at a period so critical, seemed little less than the immediate interposition of Heaven! Nor did the particulars that attended it appear less a subject of perplexity and wonder than the event itself: that Conrad should have been the deliverer of Stralenheim—the companion of his journey—an inmate of the same house, was a coincidence of circumstances so extraordinary as almost to be incredible! Of the wonder, however, Conrad himself was wholly ignorant, till it was now hastily and vaguely communicated to him. The mere circumstance of meeting the Baron, had to him nothing remarkable in it! the service he had rendered the latter had arisen from the impulse of the moment; for he neither knew, nor believed, even when he was told, that he had rescued an enemy or a competitor. Nurtured as Conrad had been in fondness and indulgence, no menace of a rival heir had ever offended his ear;

ear; no name, but that of his father, had ever been announced as standing between him and his inheritance.—All that was necessary to be known appeared to him therefore sufficiently ascertained when he beheld his parents; nor did the tumult of their mutual joy seem a season for other explanation. How sweet were the emotions with which they listened to that hasty one the moment allowed Conrad to offer on his part! With what delight did they hear that the son against whom their hearts had so often murmured, had been wanting in no duty or affection: that he had voluntarily and even rashly quitted the splendid lot assigned him, to seek those whom childhood had endeared to his memory, and either share with them, or renounce his own pretensions in life.

Ages would have seemed too little for the story each was now obliged to com-



prise in moments. How the future was to be regulated, and whether, thus fortified with double claims, it would be advisable that they should openly and immediately defy the power of Stralenheim, or, silently withdrawing, establish their own rights on the spot where his rank and influence would be comparatively insignificant, were questions too mighty and important to be easily explained to Conrad, or, when explained, to be determined upon. Till they were, profound silence was alike the interest of all. And ah! how easy was the restriction! with hearts once more kindling to hope, and recollections absorbed in the transport of the occasion, the Count and Josephine felt no want, no wish but to gaze and to listen. All they had lost—all they had desired—all for the pursuit of which they had steeped themselves in poverty and sorrow, vanished before the feeling which had now taken possession of their

their bosoms : while Conrad, pressing to his the little Marcellin, buried his face over that of the smiling boy, and seemed to have found in this new and unsuspected tie a tender medium, through which to announce his own sensibility !

Josephine, however, anxious that no premature discovery on the part of Stralenheim should blight the prospect of the future, was earnest to send her son from her. Conrad only mused at her remonstrances, and smiled at her fears.

“ Stralenheim,” said he, “ does not appear to me altogether the man you take him for :—but were it even otherwise, he owes me gratitude not only for the past, but for what he supposes to be my present employment. I saved his life, and he therefore places confidence in me. He has been robbed last night—is sick—a stranger—and

in no condition to discover the villain who has plundered him : I have pledged myself to do it—and the business on which I fought the Intendant was chiefly that.”

The Count felt as though he had received a stroke upon the brain. Death in any form, unaccompanied with dishonour, would have been preferable to the pang that shot through both that and his heart. Indignantly had he groaned under the remorse of the past, the humiliation thus incurred by it he would hardly have tolerated from any human being ; yet was it brought home to him, through a medium so bitterly afflicting, as defied all calculation. At the word *villain*, his lips quivered, and his eyes flashed fire. It was the vice of his character, ever to convert the subjects of self-reproach into those of indignation.

“ And who,” said he, starting furiously  
from

from his seat, "has entitled you to brand thus with ignominious epithets a being you do not know? Who," he added with increasing agitation, "has taught you that it would be safe even for my son to insult me?"

"It is not necessary to know the person of a ruffian," replied Conrad indignantly, "to give him the appellation he merits:—and what is there in common between my father and such a character?"

"*Every thing*," said Siegendorf, bitterly—"for that ruffian was your father!"

Conrad started back with incredulity and amazement: then measured the Count with a long and earnest gaze, as though, unable to disbelieve the fact, he felt inclined



clined to doubt whether it were really his father who avowed it.

“Conrad,” exclaimed the latter, interpreting his looks, and in a tone that ill disguised the increasing anguish of his own soul, “before you thus presume to chastise me with your eye learn to understand my actions!—Young and inexperienced in the world—reposing hitherto in the bosom of indulgence and luxury, is it for *you* to judge of the impulse of the passions, or the temptations of misery?—Wait till like me you have blighted your fairest hopes—have endured humiliation and sorrow—poverty and famine—before you pretend to judge of their effect on you! Should that miserable day ever arrive—Should *you* see the being at your mercy who stands between you, and every thing that is dear or noble in life!—Who is ready to tear from you your  
name

name—your inheritance—your very life itself—congratulate your own heart, if, like me, you are content with petty plunder, and are not tempted to exterminate a serpent, who now lives, perhaps, to sting us all!—You do not know this man,” continued he with the same incoherent eagerness, and impetuously silencing Conrad who would have spoken—“I do!—I believe him to be mean—sordid—deceitful!—You will conceive yourself safe because you are young and brave!—Learn, however, from the two instances before you, none are so secure but desperation or subtilty may reach them!—Stralenheim in the palace of a prince was in my power!—My knife was held over him!—a single moment would have swept him from the face of the earth, and with him all my future fears:—I forbore—and I am now in his.—Are you certain that you are not so too? Who assures you he does not know you?—Who tells  
you

you that he has not lured you into his society, either to rid himself of you for ever, or to plunge you with your family into a dungeon?—*Me*, it is plain, he has known invariably through every change of fortune or of name—and why not you?—*Me* he has entrapt—are you more discreet? He has wound the snares of Idenstein around me:—of a reptile, whom, a few years ago, I would have spurned from my presence, and whom, in spurning now, I have furnished with fresh venom:—Will *you* be more patient?——Conrad, Conrad, there are crimes rendered venial by the occasion, and temptations too exquisite for human fortitude to master or endure.” The Count passionately struck his hand on his forehead as he spoke, and rushed out of the room.

Conrad, whose lips and countenance had more than once announced an impatient desire to interrupt his father during the

the

the early part of his discourse, stunned by the wildness and vehemence with which it was pursued, had sunk towards the close of it into profound silence. The anxious eyes of Josephine, from the moment they lost sight of her husband, had been turned towards her son ; and, for the first time in her life, she felt her heart a prey to divided affections ; for, while the frantic wildness of Siegendorf almost irresistibly impelled her to follow him, she was yet alive to all the danger of leaving Conrad a prey to reflections hostile to every sentiment of filial duty or respect. The latter, after a long silence, raised his inquiring looks to hers ; and, whatever the impression under which his mind laboured, he understood too well the deep and painful sorrow imprinted on her countenance not instantly to conceal it.

“ These are only the systems of my father,”



ther," said he, continuing earnestly to gaze on her. "My mother thinks not with him."

Josephine spoke not: there was an oppression at her heart that robbed her of the power. Conrad covered his face with his hand, and reclined it for a moment on her shoulder.

"Explain to me," said he, "after a second pause, "what are the claims of Strahlenheim, and why he is thus formidable to us." Josephine was ill able to undertake the task: she felt it a duty, however, to expel, if possible, from the bosom of her son, feelings alike disgraceful and injurious to his father; and to exonerate the latter, as far as circumstances would permit, from that censure to which his intemperate passion had subjected him. It was not easy, however, so to relate the past events of  
Siegendorf's

Siegenderdorf's life as deeply to interest a noble or an upright mind. The candid and tender Josephine, therefore, almost betrayed the cause she strove to serve by an effect of that ingenuousness which was natural to her, and which she too evidently struggled to suppress. She detailed, with as much simplicity and exactness as the time and particulars would allow, the circumstance by which Siegenderdorf conceived himself within the power of Stralenheim; the events that occurred at Hamburg, the intelligence of Giulio in which Conrad had so deep a share, and every agitating and distressing occurrence that had since preyed upon the temper or feelings of his father. Lastly, she painted that critical point at which he now stood with respect to the Baron, and all the possible evils that might result from the persecution of the latter.

The

The countenance of Conrad gathered into increasing attention as she continued to speak : he became, as might well be expected, profoundly meditative, when he perceived the new light her narrative threw over the fate of his family, and that what he had believed to be little less than madness in the discourse of the Count was, however exaggerated by the irritation of his mind, yet grounded on the most alarming facts. Unwilling as he himself was to pain his mother by the avowal of any corroborating circumstances, he was yet secretly sensible that, in the progress of his own intimacy with Stralenheim, he had reason to surmise that the latter was in pursuit of some enemy whom he had both authority and inclination to crush. In this secret Conrad had hitherto felt little interest ; he now perceived he had the deepest. While revolving it he was bewildered with the recollection of that new  
entanglement

entanglement the Count had so lately made for himself; and saw too evidently, that, were it possible to defeat the great aim of Stralenheim by a united and open defiance, which yet they had abundant reason to doubt, there would still remain the probability of a discovery that could not fail to overwhelm them with shame and disgrace. Among the Prince's household there might be many who knew the communication between Kruitzner's residence and the palace: possibly the Intendant himself: To guard the secret of the Baron's losses was, therefore, the only method of defeating suspicion: nor was this altogether so hopeless an undertaking as it appeared; for Stralenheim, when entrusting to Conrad the particulars of the robbery, had himself doubted whether prudence did not rather require him to bury it in silence, than insult the domestics of his Highness by a charge he might find it impossible to



substantiate. This opinion Conrad had combated ; and the conduct of the business had, in consequence, been finally submitted to his discretion : a word from him would, therefore, perhaps still determine the Baron to silence ; and aware, as the former now was, of the innocence of those before suspected, he might utter that word without dishonour or insincerity.

The disposition of Conrad differed widely from that of his father : it had less passion and more decision. The difficulties with which he was encumbered faded, therefore, as he continued to meditate on the means of removing them. While listening to the Count's discourse, it had appeared to him all confusion, mystery, and chimera : he was at length master of the subject : he saw it in its clearest and strongest light, free from the passionate irritation of Siegendorf, or the softer perturbation of Josephine ;

Josephine ; though not without those attendant feelings that peculiarly marked his own character. His countenance, therefore, cleared, and he had the air of a man who, relieved from a wild and tormenting uncertainty, begins remotely to determine the point on which he must rest. He perceived that it was indispensable to the safety of his parents that they should, without delay, be extricated from the humiliating and perilous situation in which they then stood ; and to the future claims of all, that they should be personally as well as jointly asserted in the country whence they were derived. It was not possible for the most decided mind immediately to ascertain the manner in which these measures could be effected ; but Conrad pledged himself to accomplish them in some way ; and his mother, who had considered his long meditation as an inauspicious omen, felt, while he continued to speak, a sweet

assurance that he would succeed. It was agreed that he should return an hour after the close of evening, to communicate the result of his own deliberations, as well as what passed in the interim at the palace; where, should any steps be taken that appeared alarming, he would be at hand to frustrate or oppose them.

At the moment of Conrad's departure, he was surprised by the entrance of the Hungarian, who, directed by a chance inquiry, had come thither in search of him. The latter had been assistant with himself in rescuing Stralenheim from the danger of the water, and had consequently partaken of his hospitality at M——: but as his manners did not bear decidedly the stamp of high birth like those of Conrad, he was far from being taken as familiarly to the confidence or society of the Baron. Josephine had at that moment no eye or ear for

for nice discrimination : conceiving her visitor to be the associate of her son, she did not, however, omit the civilities of life ; but Conrad, who perceived it would be difficult to conceal the tender relation in which he stood to his mother, was impatient to depart ; and hardly had he quitted the house when, shaking off his companion, whom the pre-occupied state of his mind rendered an encumbrance, he withdrew to revolve in solitude, and with deep consideration, those plans and feelings to which the singular events of the morning had given birth.

Josephine, previous to the departure of her son, had received from his hands a ring of very considerable price. Money he plainly learnt from her detail could not safely be offered to Idenstein : yet some valuable that should secure the possessor from his insults might, nevertheless, should the pres-



sure of circumstances demand it, be produced, perhaps, without danger; and he submitted it to her discretion, and that of his father, either to retain or dispose of the jewel in question in any way they should deem most expedient. The Count was now in a frame of mind to listen to the event of his son's visit. The fever of his spirits had subsided: the softer and more delightful emotions by which he had been agitated at the first sight of Conrad had resumed their place in his bosom; and though he had not been able to resolve on voluntarily re-entering the room he had quitted, he yet listened to the parting steps of his son with anxious fondness and unavailing regret. Under this impression there was something peculiarly touching in the token of tender interest and concern the ring offered: there was even more in it than the circumstance itself seemed to present.

Jewels, in the remoter periods of society, were considered as a sort of heirloom, and rarely changed their fashion or their owners: that now before him the Count remembered to have frequently seen in common with many others, deemed the necessary and ceremonious appendages of a splendor he had believed inseparable from his fate. He was at that period in the very dawn and first bloom of manhood! How strange had since been the alteration both in himself and in all around! The same jewel was now drawn from the hand of his son, and for the sole purpose of rescuing him from the bitterest poverty!—His youth was almost past!—his self-importance annihilated!—the current of time had carried away half of those golden hopes with which life had been freighted, and his own indiscretion had made a wreck of the remainder!

Considerations like these were calculated

to reduce the high tone of his imperious spirit, and bring him painfully down to the level of humanity and reason. They were, indeed, but too necessary to prepare him for what was to follow; for while he yet continued to muse over the ring he was surprised with the appearance of Idenstein.

—The contemplations of the Count had insensibly devolved from the past to the future: and a plan which, though hazardous, did not appear unpromising, had presented itself to his imagination. Some person it was evident he must, to a certain degree, confide in, before it was possible he should free himself from the fetters that bound him to M——. His circle was too narrow to leave much scope for deliberation. Weilburg was merely a passive spy, with whom he had little communication: his mind revolted from the Intendant with that invincible disdain which low cunning and purse-proud habits ever engender: neither  
did

did he believe it possible, closely as the latter was connected with Stralenheim, to purchase either his silence or his acquiescence. In Idenstein, though there was much occasional insolence, there was something less habitually offensive; and had he not been needy he would probably have been only insignificant. The same temptation, therefore, and the same credulity that had made him an instrument in the hands of one man, might, if duly acted upon, operate in favour of another: and though in the scale of society a being thus venal and trifling ranked, according to the estimation of the Count, among the lowest of the low, yet, by a sentiment not uncommon to proud minds, he felt it, therefore, the less difficult to descend, and treat with him on his own ground.

It would hardly be possible to conceive a state of more whimsical embarrassment than  
that



that which took place in the mind of Idenstein at the courteousness of his reception. He entered with a temper extremely fullen, and, as he believed, determined: his recollection of the rencounter that had taken place the evening before, though very imperfect, was, indeed, such as made him resolve to avoid all personal extremities with the Count; but, as he knew enough to be assured that Baron Stralenheim's measures with regard to the former were drawing to a crisis, he was willing to take his last chance for all possible share in the event of them; and to extort from some sudden gust of passion, which Josephine's presence would prevent from becoming dangerous, what it seemed no longer probable he should obtain by craft. But he was now to be encountered with his own weapons: for Siegendorf, who, despite of the perplexities of his situation, yet felt a confidence inspired by the late favourable circumstances

circumstances and the certain support of his son, had resumed the command of his temper, and was no longer the imperious, unbending, and unobservant character he had hitherto appeared. Idenstein thus defeated, he hardly knew why or how in his meditated attack, sank insensibly into a sort of silent and wondering listener while the Count continued to talk; till the latter advancing slowly and obscurely towards his aim, made him at last remotely comprehend that it might be more for his advantage to betray, than to forward, the cause in which he had enlisted.

Throughout the whole circle of Idenstein's ideas this had never yet made one. The poverty of Kruitznor had stared him so obviously in the face, that neither the delicate habits of Josephine; nor the air of distinction which even in his most humiliating moments eminently marked the  
Count,

Count, had been able to remove the eyes of his associate from that formidable spectre: but when, in its place, phantoms of grandeur and affluence were presented to him, the whole prospect of the future underwent a sudden change. He recollected, what was strictly true, that he had, in fact, little reason to be satisfied with the Intendant; who, whatever was the value of the service they were mutually to render Stralenheim, had suffered his coadjutor to discover too evidently that *he* would have little share in the reward. With Stralenheim himself he had even less cause to be pleased. He had seen him only once; but their meeting had served, nevertheless, to display those traits of cold and forbidding arrogance which at all times marked the character of the Baron; and which, as he was taught by the selfish cunning of the Intendant to suppose Idenstein of no consequence to his plans, he did not attempt to dissemble.

dissemble. Small as the consequence of the latter might seem in the eyes of others, in his own, however, it was pretty considerable; and his zeal was already cooled in a cause that neither promised him recompense nor thanks. While he continued, therefore, to pause with apparent complacency upon the arguments presented to him, the Count watched the critical moment; and, sensible that he had himself advanced too far now to recede, he produced the jewel. Idenstein started with astonishment! Chance, and some commercial connections, made him a judge of its value. He looked earnestly at it, and considered long. The Count had also considered well before he offered it: although to him it would have been known from amidst ten thousand others, it bore, as he believed, no family distinction, no appropriate mark, that could  
ever



ever ascertain its original owner to an indifferent person: nor had he, in fact, an intention to part with it, except on such terms as should render all that might follow immaterial to him.

The hitherto wavering fidelity of Idenstein seemed at length on the point of being finally shaken: the Count pursued the advantage. With an equivocal and half confidence, he now observed, “that he had himself important reasons for continuing his journey, wholly remote from any pursuit or project that Stralenheim might be engaged in—a pursuit of which it was by no means proved that he was the object, although the mere circumstance of being mistaken for such might very considerably embarrass him.” Siegendorf, though almost assured of success, was not, however, so unguarded as to betray either his name or condition: on the contrary,  
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he still cautiously veiled both. But his air—his tone—an internal consciousness that he was nearly, though not wholly, speaking the truth, had that almost irresistible effect on his hearer, truth rarely fails to produce. Idenstein was not indeed deceived into doubting whether or no Krutzner would prove the person sought by the Baron; his conviction on that subject was even stronger than before, but his interest in believing it was less, in proportion as a more immediate and certain advantage than any yet held out to him now presented itself: he felt a secret persuasion that whatever were the temporary circumstances of the man before him, his pretensions in life were of no common kind; and gay, though undefined, visions of future fortune and patronage sparkled to his eyes. Siegendorf, who saw his purpose nearly accomplished, concluded his discourse by solemnly affirming the jewel to be

be a memorial of his family, nothing but the last exigency could induce him to part with ; and, valuable as it was in itself, he pledged his honour to redeem it at a future period with treble its price. That period, could either have looked into the future, they would have seen was never to arrive ; but the argument was conclusive with his hearer : Idenstein acceded at once ; and nothing remained but to discover in what manner his services could be rendered most useful.

In the discussion of the future, however, much embarrassment still arose ; as the secrecy necessary to the occasion was such as rendered it extremely difficult for the Count to quit M——, even with the connivance of Idenstein. How far the advice of Conrad might have been useful, or in what manner his parents could have benefited by his interference, was also a subject of deep per-

perplexity and care to the Count. It was necessary, however, so to arrange the plan with Idenstein, that the services of Conrad might not be essential in its execution, and to reserve the liberty of changing it, should a better occur; for Siegen-dorf had still too little faith in his new auxiliary to put his son in his power by an indiscreet discovery. He was moreover sensible that he could himself be but half in the power of Stralenheim, while Conrad remained unknown; and it was, therefore, of the first consequence to conceal the relationship between them. After much investigation, and many impracticable proposals, the Count and Idenstein at length simplified the plan of escape to so humble a one as seemed likely to defeat suspicion or danger. The latter engaged secretly to place a vehicle, of sufficient size to hold Kruitzner and his family, in a ruinous out-house that stood not far from the palace,



and had once served as temporary stables. To this he was, at a proper season, to add an able horse, with such little accommodations as would prevent the danger of sudden delay on their journey : he engaged, in the interim, to amuse the Intendant with fictitious accounts of the intentions of Kruitznier ; to lull both him and Stralenheim into profound security ; and, when the moment of discovery at length arrived, to baffle either inquiry or pursuit by every artifice that he could safely adopt. Such was the arrangement : yet, when made, it was difficult for the parties concerned, however fair the promises made on both sides, to separate without a mutual distrust. The Count could not in common prudence recompense his ally till his share of the agreement was performed ; and Idenstein was not without a secret surmise, that when it was performed the recompense might be either evaded or with-held. In this, however,

ever, they were equally unjust ; for the one had too much to hazard by treachery, the other too little to gain. Although the favour of the Intendant might serve Idenstein, his resentment could in fact do him little injury ; for he had nothing to lose but a character ; and there were occasions on which he had himself been diffident enough to doubt if he had that. He knew to a certainty that he offended no law, since he had never been legally employed. Had it even been otherwise, all the little jurisprudence of M—— was within his own hands ; and, what was still better towards his security, the Intendant himself had strained the power so often, that his discretion would hardly admit of his entering the lists against an opponent likely to prove dangerous. All conclusions drawn, and all objections weighed, Idenstein was, therefore, sincere ; and the communications he voluntarily made to the Count were of a

nature at once to prove his sincerity, and to point out to the latter that precipice on which he had justly suspected himself of standing.

The inundation which had continued to rise, and which Siegendorf had at one time considered as the cruel finish to his ill fortune, he now learnt, from the report of Idenstein, had been, in fact, the pledge of his safety. The latter could not, indeed, exactly ascertain all the particulars that had been canvassed between Stralenheim and the Intendant; but he well knew that a messenger had that very day been dispatched towards Frankfort, who had returned only from the impossibility of proceeding safely; and that the Baron waited, with the most anxious impatience, for his departure on the succeeding morning. The messenger had, in confidence, communicated to Idenstein, whom he knew to be trusted by his master,

master, that his errand at Frankfort was to the commandant, and that he understood he was to return in company with a military guard!—All now then was at its climax! and four and twenty hours would probably decide the fate of Siegendorf! four and twenty hours would defeat the schemes of his enemy; place him for ever, perhaps, beyond the reach of the latter, and finally restore all that was great and desirable in life; or tear him from every thing dear there, and leave his son and wife to struggle as they could, in order to preserve for him that single, solitary blessing!—His mind was roused to the encounter.—A generous and justifiable indignation awakened his feelings, and strengthened his nerves. Tumult, irritation, and all the grosser particles of his character, subsided for the time, and left a calm and steady surface, worthy of the son of Count Siegendorf and the husband of Josephine! To encounter his



fate with vigour, and to bear it, whatever it might prove, with unshaken resolution, was the determined purpose of his soul! It is the wrong we commit against ourselves that corrodes and most bitterly envenoms the heart; that we receive from others sometimes displays its noblest faculties, either by the act of repelling or enduring the evil! Siegendorf owed half his faults, and almost all his miseries, to a secret tearing consciousness of error, which he never permitted to rise into reformation. In this case it was not so!—The inheritance was not the right of Stralenheim: the means he pursued to obtain it were not those of rectitude or candour:—the Count stood pledged to his family in an honourable cause, and he rose, therefore, with the dignity of an honourable feeling to meet it.

The future now literally floated on the uncertain breath of a wind: for on the  
wind

wind depended the continuance of the flood. It was during the course of the ensuing day that Idenstein had engaged to fulfil his promise: it could not be useful to do it sooner, and might be dangerous. Tedious hours were to intervene; and that fortitude the Count had so lately assumed was indeed necessary towards supporting them: yet even those hours were to present a solace long denied to his heart and his eyes: for he was once more to see Conrad—his eldest born! the first pledge of love!—the blooming young man whose features he had hardly yet had leisure to trace, and whose noble and susceptible heart he feared he had deeply outraged by the extravagant as well as indiscreet excesses of his own!

Under this impression it was hardly possible to present a countenance and demeanour more different from the morning

than that with which the Count welcomed his son. He had even self-command enough to controul his feelings, when he found his surmises confirmed, as he feared, by the reserve of Conrad ; and, by a powerful effort, he obliged himself to respect in the latter the feelings of a virtuous indignation. Conrad, like his father, was indeed naturally haughty, and but little accustomed to the high tone of rebuke : nor had he yet recovered from the surprise of the morning, and the contemplation on the characters of both his parents to which it had given birth. That of his mother was plain, noble, tender :—a short observation had taught him to comprehend and to respect it. It was far otherwise in what regarded his father : the first extravagant folly of the Count, and the singular avowal it contained, had presented to the imagination of his son the image of some bold and daring transgressor who stands aloof from society,

ciety, and despises its obligations :—it was the leader of a banditti that seemed to start up before him under the name of a father ; and every faculty of his soul had been roused to attention. Happily, as it proved for him, the fury of the Count had not allowed him to speak at a crisis when these sentiments would have betrayed themselves ; and, in continuing to listen, they had gradually faded before the impression of wounded pride and embittered sensibility expressed in the accents of Siegendorf. But no distinct image was substituted for that which was withdrawn :—and though the words of the Count had sunk deep into the memory and heart of his hearer, they still left a strange uncertainty in both as to the character of that man, who, while he spoke with almost savage ferocity of destroying an enemy, could yet be worked up to agony by the eye of a son.

It



It was not, however, under the influence of a doubt, that Conrad could take his father to his bosom, or his confidence ; and though he would willingly have suppressed what his features announced, it was easy to see that he came to know and to understand him. The Count was painfully sensible of this, and his mind strove proportionably to assert itself. It was long since Josephine had seen the sunshine of her husband's eyes, and the snatches with which it now illumined his countenance called forth all the brightness of hers. In the garb of poverty, under the roof of dependance, shrouded as it were in sorrow and suffering, the native dignity and charms of both prevailed. They had now also leisure to contemplate the manly beauty of their son ; and their eyes mutually interchanged glances of applause and congratulation. The exterior of Conrad, though seen only by the imperfect light the fire  
dif-

diffused through their spacious apartment, was yet grand, commanding, impressive beyond even what that of his father had ever been. His person, though tall, was vigorous and full:—it seemed cast in the mould of a hero, and had nothing to do with the common and every-day race of men. The contour of his head and neck was singularly powerful and striking: it presented that bold outline sometimes formed in a moment of inspiration by the chissel of a master, and which the connoisseur or physiognomist alike seizes upon as exclusively his own:—the strength of the features was, however, subdued by the soft glow and flexible muscles of youth: his mind and manners seemed in unison with this character of person, and had a tone of daringness and resolution that bespoke him formed for extraordinary enterprises. The Count gazed on him in silence; and a thousand bright visions

sions of honourable distinction and happiness, for ever annihilated in his own person, insensibly revived in that of Conrad. The gloomy present faded before the perspective of the future; and, by the strange but natural magic of the affections, Siegendorf tasted a few moments of a felicity so exquisite, that nothing was wanting but the conviction that his son esteemed him to render it perfect.

The brow of Conrad, though he strove to clear it, was, nevertheless, evidently clouded by disquietude. Those various feelings created by the circumstances in which he had so suddenly found himself placed, had been considerably augmented by the events which had passed at the palace during his absence from it. They were, he believed, of a nature once more to kindle the turbulent passions of his father: yet the communication of them nei-  
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ther admitted of hesitation nor delay :—the moments were precious to all, and the necessity of resolving most urgent.

That half resolution which prudence had induced Baron Stralenheim to form with respect to the robbery he had sustained the habits of his character had not allowed him to fulfil : the time Conrad past with his mother had unfortunately afforded leisure to the Intendant and the Baron for more open and familiar intercourse than they had hitherto entered into ; and, during this interval of mutual explanation, Stralenheim became satisfied that the man who called himself Kruitznor was in reality no other than Count Siegendorf. He felt no disposition, however, to communicate to his companion the importance of this discovery, or the advantage he meant to make of it. It would neither have been consistent with  
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the discretion or the *bauteur* of his character, to elevate one of the Prince's domestics into the immediate confidant of his own projects or expectations in life : taking such measures as he believed would secure him the military assistance he desired from Frankfort, he left the Intendant, therefore, as much in the dark with respect to the grand secret as he had hitherto remained : but the subordinate one, as being more within the province of the latter, he resolved to communicate. Stralenheim was far from rich, and he loved money : the recital of his losses was not made, therefore, without some acrimony ; and the jealous pride of the Intendant immediately took fire, as indeed the complainant had suspected it would do, at the bare idea of attaching disgrace to any of the household of the Prince. Something resembling altercation took place between them : each, however, believed it his interest not to quarrel  
with

with the other; and the disgust which seemed upon the point of arising on both sides was, therefore, according to their own ideas, happily subdued by their mutually fixing on an intermediate person as the object of distrust. The appearance and manners of Conrad threw it, indeed, wholly at a distance: but nature had not been so liberal to the Hungarian, and they, therefore, kindly determined that fortune should be equally unjust: he had, besides, that dangerous and suspicious symptom—poverty: and though the Baron and the Intendant might probably differ in their estimate of wealth, they were nearly at issue on one point—that a poor man could seldom be deemed an honest one. On the Hungarian, therefore, they rested the whole weight of their suspicions; and though the nature of the loss did not admit of its being brought to proof, they treated him with an indignity that showed they

they did not wait for it. It was at the critical moment of his humiliation that Conrad, after a solitary walk, re-entered the palace. What his feelings were on the scene he there witnessed it was not possible for him to recapitulate to his father. His own suspicions had, indeed, in the first instance, like theirs, fallen on the Hungarian; he had since learnt their fallacy! So singularly, however, was he circumstanced, that it was not in his power to assert the innocence of the accused, though he knew it:—it was not in his power to quit the palace with him, and partake his fate, though he felt it to be unmerited: it was, unhappily, not even in his power to attest the general honour of his companion: for he had become such by accident—was little known to him—had shared his purse, because he appeared to want it; and had no other claim but that of seeming above his fortunes.

What

What those fortunes were, however, either the prudence or the resentment of the Hungarian induced him obstinately to conceal. He had retorted the indignities shown him with the determination of innocence, and the pride of a mind resolved to rest upon itself. Finally he had, without hesitation, quitted the palace, though he knew not where else he could find shelter:—for the caution of Siegendorf's ancient host had not forsaken him, and he had neither room for poverty nor for the rejected guest of the Intendant. Under these circumstances Conrad had left the Hungarian a wanderer in the environs of the town; hemmed in by the waters from leaving it, yet resolved to encounter either peril or suffering rather than submit to further degradation.—Such was the detail at length reluctantly given by Conrad, and such the feelings of which the avowal was extorted from him! What were those



of the Count on hearing the recital ! It seemed of late the peculiar misery of his fate to have the cup of comfort ever dashed from his lips at the moment he began to taste its sweetness.—Humiliation—the bitterest regret—nay even danger appeared involved in this event ! Again he was reduced to blush before his son and wife—again he looked back upon the past with grief, and upon the future step it necessarily entailed upon him with apprehension. To receive the Hungarian under his own roof at a period when every thing likely to pass there would be mysterious ;—when his stay—his departure—his connections, were of necessity such as he wished to bury in profound secrecy, was of all steps most hazardous ; yet did it seem unavoidable ; and there was even somewhat in the tone with which Conrad had uttered the narrative, as well as the penetrating observation of his eye, that seemed to show him

him alive to the necessity of making such a reparation for the injury inflicted on a stranger.

To counterbalance the many evils this unfortunate incident thus threatened, it was to be remembered that the very circumstance of that stranger's being suspected proved the Intendant's total ignorance of the private doors of communication: that the Hungarian would be no less anxious to quit a spot that must be odious to his feelings than the Count would be to dismiss him! Finally, and in itself an argument more conclusive than any other, all that Baron Stralenheim could know with respect to his vicinity to the Count, he probably did; all he could do, he unquestionably would! These reflections past with the rapidity of lightning through the mind of Siegendorf; and almost at the moment of making them, he announced to his wife

and for his intention of braving that danger to which he had himself exposed the Hungarian, by receiving him under his roof. Josephine and Conrad both paused over this. The former, nevertheless, felt, like her husband, that something was due to the innocence they had involuntarily wronged; and the opinion of Conrad, though not expressed, was not to be doubted.

The Count on his part now hastily related the arrangement made between himself and Idenstein. None more eligible, that could by any method be rendered secure, presented itself to the imagination of either party: and as Siegendorf had calculated that he should not be many hours on his route before he crossed the borders, there was reasonable ground for supposing that they might then without much risk remedy the inconvenience that would attend their mode of travelling. For this purpose Conrad  
supplied

supplied his father with gold, and the Baths of Carlsbad were appointed as the spot where he should rejoin them.

Those sweet moments of repose in which all had indulged were now, as before, rapidly passing away;—they were even already past; and such had been the tumult and perplexities attendant on their meeting that not one had been asked of those many interesting and important questions each so earnestly desired to hear answered. To prolong the stay of Conrad was to direct suspicion to him; and perhaps to involve him in that fate, which, should it overtake the Count, he only could rescue him from. That he would do so, natural affection assured his parents; that he must do so, the mere tie of interest was sufficient to attest; for even the short explanation that had arisen made it sufficiently clear that without the personal appearance of the Count the



legitimacy of his son would perhaps be ever contested. Yet his personal appearance, should the measures of Stralenheim prove successful, might, if not wholly prevented, be so long delayed as to give the latter that most dangerous of all rights, possession. To obviate this, however, every step had now been taken that caution could suggest; and the heart of Siegendorf, animated by the occasion, poured itself out with manly and unartificial magnanimity into the bosoms of his wife and son. Conrad listened with the deepest attention, and felt at length persuaded, by his own observation, that he had mistaken the character of his father; who, though the slave of passion, was not deliberately capable of those excesses it seemed to prompt. It was a doubt of the first importance to him to solve, and on which he had in consequence anxiously meditated.

Half an hour had hardly elapsed from the  
departure

departure of Conrad when the Hungarian entered. He was not entirely unknown to Josephine, but she had noticed him little when they last met. To the Count he was wholly a stranger; and the latter, who knew not exactly the degree of confidence placed in him by Conrad with respect to the relative situations of all parties, though aware that it must be a limited one, prepared to receive him with kind but cautious hospitality. He was not impressed favourably, however, by his appearance. The Hungarian was indeed devoid of those exterior advantages by which his countrymen are generally distinguished. He was low in stature and swarthy. His features were not plain, but their expression was disagreeable; and he had the air of a man who has seen and suffered much. His step and deportment, however, were military; and, together with his address, announced self-possession.

In the eyes of the Count and Josephine, which had so lately rested on the distinguished person of their son, that of their guest appeared to a particular disadvantage, nor could they avoid secretly feeling as if Strahlenheim and the Intendant had not been altogether so wild in their conjectures as they had at first concluded. The stranger just touched upon the peculiarities of his situation, and the insults he had received, like one who felt them too resentfully to be diffuse: and he seemed besides somewhat restrained by a doubt whether his host had been made any party in the story: on his own side he seemed to have received no further communication from Conrad than such as might lead him to suppose the family before him had once seen brighter days. He professed it to be his resolution to depart early the next morning at all hazards: and the Count, who was secretly anxious that he should, found an additional  
motive

motive for desiring it: since, should the Hungarian effect the journey, it would afford a certainty that the roads would be practicable for himself and his family. Josephine now retired to rest, and Siegen-dorf and his guest soon after parted; but on the nerves or the imagination of the former an impression had been made not easily to be shaken off: he was haunted by a strange and vague suspicion that the Hungarian, despite of all appearances, would, in the end, prove some secret emissary of the Baron, and that both himself and his son were duped into receiving as a guest one who was in fact only a spy. Unwilling, therefore, to trust the general safety to a stranger, the Count continued to watch during the greater part of the night: sometimes traversing the room, at others meditating in profound silence, or attempting to read. Day-light at length surprised him: when softly advancing towards the chamber of his



his guest he found him fast asleep.— Ashamed of his own doubts he at length threw himself on the bed, and snatched a few hours of repose. It was consequently not early when he awaked; and Josephine, alarmed at his long watching the night before, as well as the unusual season he had chosen for slumber, was anxiously near him:—to his great satisfaction he found that the Hungarian was gone.

The softness of the air and a bright sun gave favourable promise for the day. Before it was half over Idenstein made his appearance. He was in extreme good-humour with himself for having out-witted the Intendant; who, it was now clear, he thought, excluded him from the sight and confidence of Stralenheim. He announced to the Count the welcome intelligence that the inundation already began to subside; that there could be no question but before

before the dawn of the ensuing day the country would be passable; and that the messenger dispatched to Frankfort, angry at being again sent off on what he believed to be both a perilous and fruitless expedition, had, between his ill-humour and his haste, forgotten the bag of dispatches—an oversight which Idenstein had taken care should not be discovered at the palace till it was too late to recal him, and which he, probably, would not discover himself till he had completed his journey. Idenstein laughed heartily at the success of his own schemes, and the lucky combination of circumstances that favoured them. Nor was he sparing of his expressions of satisfaction in thus balking the sulky Baron and his sagacious assistant.

Welcome as this intelligence was, in all its points, to the Count, he was, nevertheless, in no disposition to enjoy it. As the moment of his own departure approached, he

he was worked up to a pitch of impatience he could hardly govern or endure. The period between the present hour and that of his journey was as a sort of "phantasma, or a hideous dream:" and the only particular he was truly anxious to know was whether Idenstein meant to fulfil his promise faithfully with regard to the vehicle and the horse. This he engaged to do after the close of evening, and he was then to obtain his reward. It was from that moment, therefore, the fears, the tortures of the Count were to be doubled!—for, the jewel once given, what should secure the fidelity of the receiver?

Previous to the last parting between Conrad and his parents, it had been settled on both sides that, to avoid all observation, he should appear under their roof no more. It was, nevertheless, his intention to remain within reach of the Baron, whether at

M—— or elsewhere, till Siegendorf might reasonably be supposed safe from pursuit. Nor would Conrad in this arrangement admit the possibility of hazard to himself, whatever the tender anxiety of those he spoke to might dispose them to make: and even the Count was obliged, after the storm of his passions had subsided, to acknowledge that no probable reason could be assigned that should lead Stralenheim to suspect the secret tie and relationship of Conrad. Prudence had induced the latter to point out to his father the advantage of their reunion before either entered Prague. The neighbourhood of the Baths of Carlsbad had been fixed upon as the most eligible spot for this purpose; and Siegendorf, while attending there the approach of his son, proposed to open a communication with the metropolis; to prepare the way for his own personal appearance, and to proceed forward immediately on the arrival of  
Conrad,



Conrad, with every circumstance of splendor and family concord that could give validity to their claims. Such at least was the intention announced by the Count:—but his inmost soul did not confirm it! an ill-omened voice seemed incessantly to issue from thence, and to silence, with the force of presentiment, every hope he studiously cherished. It was not feebleness of mind; or, if feebleness, it was confined in its operation to a single idea:—for to all the accompanying ones he presented an undaunted, and almost heroic resolution: but he was secretly persuaded that he should never escape Stralenheim;—and he was right:—he never did escape him!

On the surface, however, every thing went well. The day continued fine: the flood obviously subsided; and soon after dark Idenstein fulfilled his promise: so disposing the horse and calèche, that should  
they,

they, in the event, appear to have been left by him, he had reason to flatter himself that the Count's appropriation of them would rather wear the air of a fraudulent seizure, than a private convention of the parties. Siegendorf earnestly scrutinised the features of his ally before he parted with the ring. He saw much foolish exultation in them, but no insincerity: in fact, there was none to see. The most mature deliberation had not pointed out to Idenstein any motive of interest stronger than that he was now pursuing; and he, therefore, as heartily wished the Count gone, as the other wished himself. He failed not, however, to make him reiterate his promise of redeeming the pledge at a high price, whenever occasion allowed of his doing so, and of further rewarding the service now rendered. On his part, he swore solemnly to the faithful performance of all he had engaged for; and, having received

ceived his recompence, walked triumphantly home—never from that moment to know peace, safety, or advantage, in its possession.

He must be a deep dissembler who evades all suspicion in a heart and eye keenly alive to it. The Count felt, at length, something like conviction that Idenstein was no such character. He had turned his steps, therefore, with a satisfied mind towards Josephine, when the steps of some one entering arrested his attention. He looked hastily round, and saw, not without a mingled sensation of surprise and displeasure, that it was the Hungarian. There was, however, nothing alarming attended the re-appearance of the latter, except in the circumstance of his re-appearing at all. He professed himself weary and exhausted ; and the account he gave of his absence was such as, while simple, wore the air of truth.

truth. The flood, though hourly sinking, proved, upon trial, not to have sufficiently subsided to enable a stranger to ascertain the track. He had, nevertheless, made the experiment in different directions, and had in all encountered a degree of danger which had deterred him from proceeding ; till being, at length, assured by the peasants that a very few hours would allow him to accomplish without hazard what it was evident would at that juncture be attended with much, he had given up the undertaking, and, putting his horse in one of the numerous out-stables of his Highness, had returned, again to claim the hospitality of his former host. He added, that he met Conrad not long before, who recommended to him the step he had now taken.

In the round of possible events there was hardly any from which the mind of Siegendorf would have revolted more



powerfully than from the simple one that thus presented itself. He had conceived an invincible disgust to the Hungarian from the very first moment he had seen him!—a disgust which he was conscious originated chiefly in that sense of humiliation the presence of the latter could not but inspire, by recalling to his memory the most disgraceful incident of his life. He had struggled vigorously against the injustice of his own suspicions, and it was only a few hours before that he had smiled at their fallacy: they now at once recurred in full force. The very consciousness that they did so, taught him to spurn a feeling which he conceived to be as unmanly and degrading as he supposed it ill-founded. It was not possible, indeed, for him to conceal from the Hungarian that his appearance was unexpected, and, it might be surmised, undesired: yet he controuled himself so far as to receive his guest with  
tokens

tokens of hospitality, and invited him to partake the frugal meal to which he was himself sitting down. The Hungarian, who stood in need of refreshment, accepted the offer. He was no talker:—but there was something clear and impressive in his language when he spoke: and his voice, equally full and sonorous, was of that sort which the ear when it has once received never forgets. His remarks, however, as well as the general character of his mind, had a hardness peculiarly offensive to that of the Count; and though it was easy to perceive that he had lived much in the world, and had observed closely upon it, the impression he made upon his host was not at all more favourable than before. Busy imagination too still pointed out something particularly sinister and watchful in his eyes: yet the evil of admitting him, whatever its consequences, could neither be remedied nor

further guarded against. His discourse betrayed that he was vindictive ; and policy, therefore, no less than justice, extorted from the Count all the exterior offices of courtesy. They at length parted. The Hungarian, as before, retired to rest ; and Josephine, at the earnest intreaty and almost command of her husband, did the same.

But the power Siegendorf had exerted over her, he could not extend to himself. He continued to walk the ante-room till the watching of the two preceding nights at length stupefied and overwhelmed him : when, throwing himself into a chair by her bedside, he gave way to what he believed to be mere momentary drowsiness. Josephine watched likewise for a considerable time, till her own eyes, which had involuntarily shared the vigils of his the night before, though he had not imparted  
their

their true cause, became heavy : the profound tranquillity of all around, and the soft breathings of her child, who lay on a mattraßs not far distant, united to lull her, as well as Siegendorf, to repose : her eyelids at length closed ; and, in a few moments after, all three were buried in a deep sleep. That of the Count, though apparently calm, was far from being really so. Confused images still continued to flit before him. Stralenheim, the Hungarian, and even Idenstein, alternately harassed his imagination :—the scene then changed ; he lost sight of them ; and, by a rapid transition, fancied himself within the limits of his own castle at Siegendorf. His father was alive there : but pale—meagre—hollow-eyed. On a sudden the figure ceased to be his father, and became a phantom. He would have avoided it—but it followed—it persecuted—it haunted



him!—In the midst of these, and similar chimeras, the Count started and awoke. The watch-light, which was more than half consumed, announced the near approach of morning; and Josephine, whom his start had disturbed, awoke also; both instantly arose. Breathless with impatience, Siegendorf hastened to assure himself that the horse and vehicle were still under cover. All was precisely as he had left it the night before. He harnessed the horse with his own hands, and disposed their little baggage in the manner most commodious for travelling. Josephine meantime was preparing a scanty breakfast of pottage for the little Marcellin, when, at the moment that her husband re-entered the house, both recollected the Hungarian. The Count advanced towards his chamber-door: it was slightly closed, but not fastened. He looked in, and perceived with some surprise

prise that his guest was gone. A moment's reflection on the past told him that the street-door had been unbarred when he himself first descended ; and a glance towards the future seemed to announce that the Hungarian was somewhere stationed to detain him. There was no leisure, however, to pause over the mystery : life or death—liberty or destruction—seemed to hang upon the point of time before them ; and whatever might be the schemes that baffled or opposed their departure, the die was cast—the effort must be made.

The moon in the interim had sunk, and it was yet dark ; the Count, whose anxiety for those he was to guide, induced him to hesitate between the opposing dangers of precipitation or delay, once more quitted the house, to judge from the fading of the stars how near it was to sun-rise.

He had gazed earnestly on them for some moments, when, by their pale and uncertain light, he saw the branches move in a part of the garden nearest that of the palace : some loose stones fell from the wall, and a man at the same instant was seen to leap it. Siegendorf advanced hastily, but by the form and step perceived that the intruder could be no other than Conrad. Touched with this proof of filial anxiety the Count quickened his pace ; but he was startled with the fierce demeanour and menacing gesture of his son,

“ Stop !” said the latter, in an imperious, though smothered tone, and while they were yet at some paces distance, “ Before we approach each other, tell me whether I see my father or a murderer ?”—Siegendorf paused in astonishment ; but unable to understand him, again advanced near enough to perceive that

that he was extremely pale, and agitated beyond all common convulsions of the soul.

“Answer, as you value the life of either!” again exclaimed Conrad, motioning his father from him.

“Insolent young man! to what would you have me answer?”

“Are you, or are you not, the murderer of Baron Stralenheim?”

“I was never yet the murderer of any man,” replied the Count fiercely; and starting in his turn some paces back;—  
“What is it you mean?”

“Did you not last night enter the secret gallery?—Did you not penetrate to the chamber of Stralenheim?—Did he”——  
and



and his voice suddenly faltered,—“ Did he not die privately by your hand ? ”

The Count, who at length comprehended the horrible mystery included in his son's words, turned pale and aghast : while Conrad, bending distrustfully forward, gazed at him as though his very soul would have passed through his eyes. The wan and quivering countenance of his father spoke a language not to be misunderstood.

“ You are then innocent ? ” said Conrad, emphatically.—In terms fearfully solemn, the Count uttered an imprecation on himself, if his hand had ever executed, or his heart conceived, a project of deliberate assassination.

“ Baron Stralenheim is, however, dead,” continued Conrad, after a long and gloomy pause,

pause. "It is past doubt that his chamber has been secretly entered this night. Yet no bar has been forced—No appearance of violence is to be discovered, save on his person. His household has been alarmed—the Intendant is stupefied in a second debauch, and incapable of exertion. I, therefore, took upon myself the care of summoning the police:—Nature and filial duty must plead my pardon if"—he stopt in a tone of strong emotion. Siegendorf who in its imperfect expression at once comprehended all the terrible struggles that could not fail to arise at such a juncture between nature and honour in a noble mind, agitated with the consciousness of his own degraded situation—the affecting contrast of his son's virtues—the danger—the disgrace—the infamy he saw prepared for them all, threw himself upon the neck of Conrad, and, for the first time in his life, wept bitterly. The language of truth

carries

carries with it an eloquence that is rarely doubted, and the Count read his acquittal in the eyes of his son.

“ Yet you have no guests—no domestics—no visitors,” said Conrad in a tone of rapid interrogation, as his mind seemed still eagerly to revolve all the possible chances of danger from the fatally mysterious passage. Siegendorf suddenly struck his hands together, and repeated the name of the Hungarian.

“ He is gone !—He went yesterday !”

“ No !—he returned !”

“ When ?—At what time ?”

“ Last night !”

“ And he slept——”

“ In

"In the only chamber I had to offer him—the last, and dangerous one!"—Conrad, without speaking, made a hasty and impatient motion towards the house.

"It is too late," said the Count stopping him; "you will only terrify your mother!—the Hungarian is gone!"

A deep and gloomy despondency seemed for some moments to impose silence on both. Conrad did not break it, but the unhappy Siegendorf in agony of soul at length loudly cursed that indiscretion on his own part which had thus exposed them to danger; and traced, though too late, in the hard and vindictive character of his guest, all the portentous warnings of a bloody catastrophe!—That catastrophe, bloody as it had proved, was past!—Strahlenheim no longer lived either to suffer or to hope! It was Siegendorf who now  
stood



flood the devoted victim ! more surely so by the destruction of his enemy than by the bitterest rancour of his life ! Vainly did the removal of that enemy clear from his path the sole obstacle to honours and to fortune ! Between him and all that he could claim, all that he could hope, a black and dreadful chasm had opened, impossible as it appeared to pass :—for where was he to find the Hungarian ? How prove the crime upon him, or, when proved, exonerate himself from the charge of being at least an accessory ?

Conrad, through whose imagination these and a thousand other difficulties and dangers were tumultuously rushing, yet saw, and pointed out with that vigour which marked his character, the only favourable chances that remained. Obscure and unknown as Kruitznier was, what individual at M——

was

was to suspect in him the princely fortunes and hereditary distinctions of Count Siegen-dorf? Who could divine the connection between his fate and that of the Baron? Who was likely, for a time at least, to discover the possibility of Kruitznér's effecting the crime, or, when discovered, find a clue sufficiently unequivocal to guide him through that labyrinth in which the sullen pride and crooked policy of Stralenheim, together with the mysterious situation of his adversary, had placed them both?—No letters had yet reached Frankfort—none would probably ever reach it:—for how would Idenstein now venture to produce, what he had once so indiscreetly concealed?—At the worst, the Count's name in the dispatches was probably a borrowed one; and what testimony was to prove the identity of his person?—Who was even interested in doing it? Stralenheim was an individual of but common rank

rank in his own country, in any other he was insignificant; on the spot where he had perished he was solitary. Law, palsied in its operations by the influence of circumstances, would do little: justice and promptitude might do every thing: they might teach the innocent man to rescue himself by a vigorous effort from that ambiguous situation to which he was in danger of falling a victim, and place him as far out of the reach of any present enemy as fate had now placed him out of the reach of a former one. Every moment, however, became valuable! A dreadful responsibility was attached to Conrad, and each instant as it past threatened to make his stay fatal. Even at the period when he believed his father guilty, he had had the precaution not to expose him to suspicion by entering his doors. The former stood now fully acquitted in his eyes, and to guard him was consequently no less the duty of his justice

justice than of his heart. The Count it was obvious therefore must fly, and that instantly : the means seemed providentially prepared. It was equally clear to both that Conrad must remain ; since, by becoming the companion of their flight, he would at once have exposed the connection between himself and his family, and doubled the danger of all : nor was he of a character to shrink from danger in any form ; much less in that remote and doubtful one which attended his stay. The moment the secret doors of communication were discovered, as during the minute researches of the police they inevitably must be, Kruitznor and the Hungarian would alike become the decided objects of suspicion. The active character of Conrad might yet find means to trace out the retreat of the latter ; and should his own relationship to the former remain unsuspected, as there was every reason to conclude it would do,



he might without difficulty so misdirect pursuit, as materially to favour the flight of his father. With a sense of humiliation that could not but be painful, he himself pointed out this circumstance; and was reduced, with whatever reluctance, to sink the demands of a nice but savage honour in the tender and indispensable duties of a son.

Arrangements that have their foundation in necessity are almost intuitively understood: those for the Count's journey had been previously made. A very few moments served to decide all that remained; and hardly one was given to that embrace which each party painfully felt might be their last. Conrad a second time named the baths of Carlsbad as the place of meeting, if they were indeed ever to meet again!—After which most earnestly recommending dispatch and vigour to his father, he

once more leapt the wall, and Siegendorf once more found himself alone.—Alone indeed!—or rather in a horrible gloom, peopled with frightful and distorted images, which presented to him the spectres of a guilty mind even in the moment of innocence. A single quarter of an hour appeared to have changed the position of every existing object, of every relative feeling!—He looked around, and hardly believed the same Heaven shone over his head, or that the ground was solid beneath his feet.—He looked within, and found it even more difficult to conceive that his enemy was annihilated: that all traces of him would soon be concealed from every human eye: that he lived only to his; and that, by an almost incredible transition, he was himself obliged to lament his fate! He began to feel that he should now, indeed, never escape him; that a strange ordination entwined their fates with each other; and

that the grave must close on both, ere it could snap the mysterious link of memory.

Josephine, who had for some time anxiously waited the return of her husband, at length came to seek him. At sight of her he started from the wild and tumultuous contemplation in which he had been engaged, and her presence, like that of a spirit of light, seemed for a while to dispel all evil. Snatching Marcellin by the hand, he now eagerly, though silently, led both towards their little vehicle, and placed them in it, where it stood in the road, sheltered by the extremity of the garden wall. —The growing light of the sun was just visible on the tops of the distant mountains : the early cocks began to crow : every eye and every shutter as yet seemed closed in the town, when Siegendorf, at length, drove rapidly from it, carrying away with him

him confused images of blood, robbery, assassination, and disgrace, which he had travelled many leagues before he could dissipate.

The low and marshy grounds of the neighbourhood were past with a celerity that did not permit them to see the dangers to which they exposed themselves. In proportion as they receded from the vicinity of the Oder, the traces of inundation, which had chiefly lain on the side towards Frankfort, disappeared; and the road became progressively firmer. They had been before so close upon the frontier as quickly to find themselves beyond the boundaries of Silesia; and the Count was well aware that the incessant hostilities which had long prevailed throughout the whole range of country, though now suspended in consequence of an armistice that was believed to be the fore-



runner of a general peace, had so shaken the very foundations of civil society, that the intermediate links between each district were broken; and the police no where sufficiently connected to reclaim any fugitive beyond a limit so narrow, that it was in all probability past. They already breathed the purer air of the high-lands, and found the benefit of the increasing light: that sacred stillness with which nature in elevated regions seems to receive the newborn day, was calculated, in its constitutional effects, to silence the irritation of the nerves and the heart. By degrees the soft lines of the horizon strengthened and became embodied: light shade and colours successively diffused themselves over the surrounding objects; and all was beauty and harmony, save in the restless imagination of the Count, and the anxious feelings of his wife. Josephine who had ever at intervals continued to look back, on reaching

ing

ing the heights directed her eye, as far as its power could extend, to the whole tract of country around: it presented one vast and tranquil solitude, disturbed only by the soft undulations that swept before the breeze. A faint blue vapour, which seemed to rise like smoke from the valley, and was just visible between broken hills, announced, however, to her imagination at least, the hateful spot where so much sorrow and suffering had been encountered; and, with an eternal adieu, she blended a sigh at the recollection that it still detained Conrad. Alas! how would her maternal heart have been wrung with apprehension, could she have divined the circumstances under which he remained!

Before the travellers lay the woods that bound Lusatia to the east, and stretch in long and blackening shadow southwards towards Bohemia. It was the intention of

the Count to skirt these, and on entering Saxony slowly emerge from the debasement and poverty to which circumstances had subjected him. In the progress of his journey it was not, however, among the least of his sufferings that anxiety for the possible fate of Conrad would not allow him to confide to the tender feelings of Josephine that gloomy secret which engrossed so large a share of his own: or even strengthen the belief he himself entertained, that the danger of pursuit had, from the moment of their departure, been far less than she suspected: for what individual, in the tumult and horror of those scenes which must immediately have succeeded, was likely to turn his attention to a being apparently so insignificant as Kruitzner?—*His enemy was silenced! His pursuer slept in eternal forgetfulness of all he had so lately coveted—all he had confidently assured himself that morning's sun would secure*

to

to him! The Intendant, it was plain by the report of Conrad, was in no condition to take the directing power out of the hands of the latter: Idenstein had most probably shared his excesses; and, were it otherwise, had, by a conduct alike venal and worthless, inadvertently involved his own fate so deeply with that of Kruitznier as obviously to render it more his interest to withhold, than to forward, any cause of suspicion against the latter. There, nevertheless, yet existed one crafty and vindictive being Siegendorf believed he ought reasonably to fear; and whom, of all others, though to him his crime had been useful, he was most inclined to abhor:—it was the Hungarian; who, if yet lurking in the woods, might prove a dangerous enemy, because a desperate one. The Count was, however, not defenceless; for Conrad, previous to their last parting, had supplied him with arms.

The



The travellers at length entered upon the entanglements of the forest, and had no other guide than that the wheel-tracks formed by the peasant supplied. But though at a distance all had appeared dark and sombre, nature, at their nearer approach, put on a more smiling aspect, and seemed to delight in contrasting that gloom with which the vices and miseries of man had disfigured her. The sun had long been above the horizon, and had dispersed a thousand fleecy though beautiful clouds that hitherto impeded his brightness. His rays sometimes checquered the ground, and were sometimes wholly excluded by clustered branches, that were yet only covered with the light foliage of spring. A rich and dewy moisture lay on the underwood beneath; at intervals reposing on patches of turf, that thus assumed the appearance of velvet, or swelled into large drops, which, trembling from the points of the leaves, sparkled like

so many diamonds. The air was perfumed with fragrance, and the thickets filled with numerous sportive, but timid animals, seldom visible to the eye, though they occasionally scudded before it: while the birds, more secure in their airy habitations, answered each other in that delightful language which is at once music to the heart and the ear.—Josephine, who in the contemplation of nature experienced a sacred feeling, that, while it swells the soul with rapture, fills the eye with tears, laid her hand in silence on that of her husband, and gently checked the speed with which he was driving.

“For, over all, she saw the form divine,

“The Uncreate, in the created shine,

“Bright as in drops of dew the sun's reflected beam!”

The Count startled by the action, looked earnestly around for some cause of alarm, and then at her. He had mechanically,  
rather

rather than from any effort of will, continued to urge the horse forward: he now loosed him, and gave him a short but necessary respite.

Although Siegendorf and his family could hardly be said to enjoy safety in the forest, they yet encountered no positive danger there. The simplicity and meanness of their appearance offered little temptation to the wealthy robber, and from petty plunderers the athletic form, and undaunted eye of the Count, was in itself a sufficient protection. As they approached the borders of Saxony, they frequently met light parties of troops who scoured the country: but though by these they were casually reconnoitred, they were never detained, and they found themselves at length decidedly within the territories of the electorate. Siegendorf, who was now familiar with almost every spot through which he was to pass,

judged

judged no method so certain of confounding all personal identity as that of pursuing their road by way of Leipzig. It was near the season of the fair, and a prodigious concourse of strangers were daily assembling from all parts of Germany of a rank and description precisely opposite to those with whom the Count had ever associated.— There was little probability that he should be recognised by any one ; and Josephine was totally unknown. They, therefore, entered the gates of the city, in company with many others, at a late hour, and, stationing themselves in an obscure quarter, enjoyed a short and salutary repose. From thence, slowly journeying forward through devious roads, they daily increased their comforts, till they approached Carlsbad; where, on arriving, all traces of the abject and impoverished Kruitznor were finally absorbed in the increasing splendor and princely titles of Count Siegendorf.

The



The Count had not proceeded thus far on his journey without having found leisure to weigh more maturely the danger that attended not completing it. He had now reached that spot where he had pledged himself to wait the arrival of Conrad: an event his heart eagerly panted for, but which his prudence suggested to him to be a subordinate consideration to that of entering Prague. Various reasons daily concurred to strengthen this opinion: yet perhaps amongst them that restless inquietude which ever agitates the human heart at the near approach of any interesting struggle, and disposes it at all hazards to rush on to certainty, was not the least. A communication the Count succeeded in establishing with one of his father's friends, informed him, that no claimant to the family estates and honours had hitherto appeared. The total silence which had long prevailed with regard to himself, had, however, led

to

to a general conclusion that he was no more. There was apparently, therefore, no reason to doubt but Conrad, if on the spot, would have been the admitted heir. But the Count's correspondent added that his son had disappeared several weeks before the death of his grandfather, and that public expectation was at a loss to decide, "Whether, from some peculiar circumstances in which he was supposed to stand, the claims of the collateral branch might not be received in preference to his."

Siegendorf, too well aware that these circumstances referred to the birth of Conrad, and alive at once to all the danger of leaving conjecture busy with the name of either, perceived that his personal appearance alone could silence it. The occasion was critical, and loudly forbade all delicacy or delay: yet could he not resolve on re-entering Prague without experiencing a sensation

sation that shook his very soul. The ill-omened hour in which he had quitted it returned to his imagination in vivid colours; and a thousand painful as well as humiliating recollections of the past started forward, to blend with a sort of half-apprehension from the novelty and strangeness of the future. He had no longer a father—hardly a country—still less a friend!—expatriated as he had been, and shook as the nation itself was to its very foundations, he felt that he should at best be recognised by it without being known—allowed without being claimed. Under this impression, he entered the gates like a man who expects them every moment to be closed against him; till well-remembered and familiar spots once more saluting his eye, he at length began to breathe freely: to rouse from that state of agitation which for a while rendered all objects visionary; to feel that he was still the son of Count Siegendorf; and to assure

assure himself that the sorrow or degradation of the past was to be ranked henceforward among those fearful chimeras conjured up by the indiscretion of youth, and which fade of themselves before the season of maturity. This was, unhappily, a disposition of mind the Count was ever too much disposed to indulge. He had a natural propensity towards classing every error into which he plunged among the chances of the moment:—an insignificant link in the great chain of human events; and well deserving, therefore, to be snapt from it. The materials with which man forges his own fetters are seldom, however, of so brittle a nature!—but grievously as his had eaten into his soul, they had not yet changed its character: and, indeed, a judgment far more steady would probably have been shaken from its equilibrium by the sudden transition to a station so splendid as that which he was now entitled to demand.



Elevating and tumultuous as the secret feelings of Siegendorf became, the deep-rooted pride of his nature, nevertheless, enabled him to conceal them. His exterior presented a man chastened, not subdued:—self-governed, not humbled:—and who, in the resumption of his rights, felt nothing so strongly as his claims to them. The city was at that period rising from its own ashes. Repeated sieges and pillage had reduced the inhabitants to despair, when the treaty\*, which was on the point of being ratified, once more awakened all to vigorous exertion. The states were solemnly assembling, and Siegendorf presented himself before them like one arisen from the grave. There was something in the incident peculiarly in unison with the whole condition of society. All that was great or illustrious had undergone a temporary eclipse, and the hearts of men leant with

\* The peace of Prague, signed May 1635.

indulgence to every thing that looked like the restoration of order. Of those nobles whom the Count formerly believed his enemies, many had disappeared, as he had prophetically deemed they would, amidst the political convulsions of the times: others, who retained only a confused recollection of the past, were struck with silent respect at his appearance and demeanour: while the larger body, by whom the name of Siegendorf was habitually honoured, acknowledged, after little hesitation, the family lineaments and claims: the Count was received as its genuine representative with a facility he had no reason to expect: its estates were made over to him; and he took formal possession of all the privileges and rights of nobility.

The proudly cherished hope of his heart, so long deferred, was then at length completed! Neither his own errors, nor the

resentment of his father, had defeated his fortune ! Josephine, in defiance of all obstacles, was raised to that eminence on which he had so much desired to place her : Conrad only was impatiently looked for, to fill the void in his affections ; and neither ambition nor avarice could covet any gift that did not present itself at the shrine of his pride !

Amid reflections thus gratifying, the Count could not forget that two acts of self-humiliation yet remained to be fulfilled, before he could so discharge the past from his mind, as fully to enjoy the future. The gold of the miserable Stralenheim was cankering on his hands and in his heart. Both pride and sensibility imperiously demanded its immediate application to some pious purpose ; and it was accepted with gratitude by the religious of a neighbouring convent. The person and character of the donor

donor were not unknown there, and they believed that God was calling home to himself a penitent, whose licentious life extorted from him this atonement.—The second act of duty, though not less indispensable, carried with it a sort of blended feeling from which he would willingly have shrunk, had decorum permitted: the self-acquittal it seemed to promise, nevertheless, induced him to fulfil it; and with a lingering and reluctant heart, he turned his steps towards the grave of his father.

Count Siegendorf had been buried in the great church at Prague: nor could his son see without emotion the simple monument dedicated to his memory; the sole memorial of one, who, whatever his faults, had fondly loved him! A sense of compunction irresistibly obtruded as he remembered the paternal remonstrances so often made on one side, and the filial reparation so



vainly promised on the other !—All was now over ! his father slept in that quiet sanctuary where no reparation could reach him, and whence no voice, save that of conscience, ever yet issued to a son ! The Count, after a confused and painful meditation of some moments, turned from the spot. He then ordered a magnificent piece of sculpture to be placed over it ; and the relative ideas, if not expelled from his bosom, were at least blended with such as more immediately interested him, when, on his return home, he found a billet from Conrad. It was forwarded from Carlsbad by the courier who had been dispatched thither to receive either that or the writer, and announced the speedy approach of the latter ; communicating at the same time, in mysterious terms, the important intelligence that all had gone well since they parted.

The

The Count, relieved thus from the deep anxiety he had hitherto experienced with respect to the situation of his son, now prepared to revisit his own patrimonial estates. Princely as they were, and defended by the vassals of the family, they had not wholly escaped devastation, though their vicinity to Prague had secured them from an evil more horrible than even war itself had inflicted. Arms were, indeed, no longer the sole employment of Bohemia, but unhappily the passion for them had not subsided with the necessity. That licentiousness which becomes the habit of a nation after any long and bloody struggle still prevailed, even in the rank where duty and honour ought first to have subdued it: and among the nobility many stood suspected by the state, of joining, either through the effects of private animosity or individual ferociousness, in those sports of blood by which the labours of the pea-

fant were laid waste, and the cottages of the poor consumed. Siegendorf had not skirted the woods which encircled his native country without being secretly aware of the species of danger to which he exposed himself; or without knowing that they harboured beings who allied the human too closely to the animal nature, and wasted in a wild and savage courage those powers which were bestowed for the sacred purposes of protection and kindness. Nor had the enormities of such men even the common palliation of necessity : riotous, on the contrary, with prosperity and youth, their faculties, like some kind of plants, seemed to have grown rank by the very richness and exuberance of the soil on which they fell. From invaders like these no spot had hitherto been secure : for they came no one knew whence, and vanished no one knew whither : their partisans, as well as themselves, were invisible ; and, like the cur  
who

who slaughters the sheep in the night, reposed sleek and quiet at their master's door in the morning.

The castle of Siegendorf, covering a territory in itself, and equally secured by its bulwarks and neighbourhood to the metropolis, bore, however, no traces of a desolation from the contemplation of which the soft and almost voluptuous character of the Count induced him to revolt with peculiar horror. His return there, at a crisis so little expected, seemed to operate like a charm upon every individual within his estates. Crowds to whom he was personally unknown hastened to greet him. Nature herself seemed to welcome his approach, and to put forth the loveliest colours of her loveliest season. Joy, acclamation, and an enlivening spirit, pursued his footsteps: the young spoke with generous indignation of the reports handed down by  
their



their elders ; while the latter, to whom the excesses of his youthful days were known, saw with delight and surprise the alteration time appeared to have effected. They admired the temperate dignity of his manner, the equanimity with which he entered again upon his former fortunes, and the sobriety of his domestic establishment : they were never weary of gazing on Josephine and her blooming boy : the castle was presently filled with innumerable retainers ; together with all the pomp, civil or military, of a Baron of the feudal times ; and it was at the crisis of universal festivity that Conrad arrived to partake it.

The past, however, it quickly appeared, had not faded from the recollection of Conrad in the same degree it seemed to have done from that of his father : and his presence, therefore, by an effect to others wholly inexplicable, first chilled the glow  
of

of exultation and felicity in the bosom of the latter. The events that yet remained to be related by Conrad were, indeed, of a nature again to darken the imagination of both: however favourable in themselves, they were, at best, but the winding up of a black and gloomy tragedy; and all the horrible suggestions that arise from blood yet unappeased insensibly presented themselves, and mingled with the detail. That reluctance the Count had ever felt to the shocking Josephine with it had been increased by his late habits of reserve, and became almost invincible, when he reflected on the security and happiness in which she now reposed. He himself learnt with deep, though useless, and therefore silent regret, that the Hungarian had escaped all research. That the Intendant, stunned by the danger he apprehended from his own indiscretion, had, for the most part,

part, confided in Conrad, or taken such feeble and undecided steps as were of little avail in the pursuit of the criminal. That Idenstein, equally selfish, had even tacitly assisted to baffle the measures he pretended to enforce, through fear of being involved in their consequences. Finally, that the wretched Stralenheim—unknown, unlamented—had been hurried to an obscure grave; and that vague depositions, lodged in the hands of magistrates little disposed to interest themselves in the fate of an alien, seemed all the reparation likely to attend his memory.

Selfish and proud as was the nature of the Count, there was constitutionally a sort of tender point in it, which the mode of his very pleasures and pursuits had contributed to increase. Mystery and blood were offensive to his imagination : yet had he so  
closely

closely entwined both in his own fate, as to render it almost impossible to free his recollection from either. Nor was his pride less wounded than his sensibility, when he remembered that there existed a spot upon the globe, where, though he himself might indeed remain for ever unknown, his person was devoted to infamy ; where the name he had borne would be deemed synonymous with robbery and murder ; and where to be seen only, was to incur the penalty of the rack !

These were particulars Conrad could not conceal : nor did the character of the latter appear gifted with the refinement that might have taught him to think it necessary to do so. The past still seemed too strongly impressed upon his mind, to permit him to lose sight of it : and Siegendorf, who, in the tumultuous succession of feelings incident



to his own change of fortune, had lost, for a time, the bitterness of retrospection so long the habit of his heart, yet knew well how to allow for it in that of his son. Conrad, nevertheless, felt for his mother; and strongly urged the Count to conceal from her a secret offensive to the sensibility of her sex, and which might encumber her with a thousand weak fears, or superfluous regrets, calculated to embitter the future lives of all. Siegendorf had discernment enough to trace in the tender consideration thus shown by his son a proud repugnance to the avowal of those degradations which the circumstances of his situation had obliged him to submit to: but it was an allowable pride; it had yielded only to the safety of his father; nor could the latter resolve to extort a farther sacrifice from it: he, therefore, acceded to a reserve he had never till lately practised towards Josephine;

phine ; and, with a generous, though half-fullen tenderness, strove to confine to himself feelings he yet found it would be impossible ever to silence ;—the aching consciousness of a sullied mind—a sort of accessory guilt—and an indefinite remorse !—Nor was this, alas ! the only cankerous speck upon the apparent prosperity of Siegendorf ! a sort of secret fore-knowledge, which is, in fact, only a nice calculation made by the feelings, before we permit it to become an operation of the judgment, already corroded that distinguished lot fortune seemed to have prepared for him !

The employments of the Count had been hitherto so numerous, and his reflections so much engaged, as to have precluded the discharge of various duties imposed upon him by the nature of his situation. The rank he held in the state, together with  
the

the favour shown him by the Imperial court, bade him hope for the highest honours either could bestow : yet, alienated as he had been from his family, it was not possible for him to know what had been its views or connections during his absence, except by an examination of his father's papers. To the memory of that father the Count had not yet learnt to be just. The habitual resentment he had permitted himself to cherish against him while living had even withered those sensibilities which so often wait to ripen over the grave : and though, in returning to his native domain, Siegendorf could not wholly divest himself of local and tender recollections, the circumstances succeeding his return had blunted their force : nor had he been desirous to conceal from himself, that he retrod, with exultation, spots whence he had at one time believed paternal authority for  
ever

ever excluded him; and triumphed in the consciousness of having vindicated his own rights and judgment. Hours of reflection had succeeded these temporary transports; and had combined with some late observations to create a secretly agitating feeling, which impelled him to enter with the deepest interest upon the office before him: shutting himself up, therefore, alone in his chamber, at a late hour, he prepared to fulfil it.

In reviewing either the political or military transactions of his father, the Count found little interest, though some information. The party under which the former had acted was now wholly subdued; and the latter, from the early bias of his life, rather than any just mode of thinking, had ever cherished a decided preference for the Austrian cause, which the favour shown him by its leaders had considerably strengthened. Passing, therefore, rapidly forwards,



he fell upon such papers as more immediately related to himself: they were of a nature to touch the most secret recesses of his soul; and never had the occurrences of his early life been presented in colours so vivid, or so touching, as in the affecting comments which solitude and affliction left his father leisure to make upon them. He pursued the examination with still increasing interest as the dates grew nearer and nearer to late events. At length he reached that which ascertained the exact period of Conrad's departure from the castle. The chain there snapt! But while the mutilated and imperfect fragments announced no reality, they left a field for conjecture respecting the conduct of the latter, at once singular and alarming. With conjecture, indeed, the Count had been before too busy; but never had his imagination extended it to that fearful point which now indistinctly presented itself. A palpitation seized his heart :

heart: his head swam, his eyes were darkened: by a violent effort he again attempted to read, but all that followed seemed confusion and mystery. His father had survived many weeks—long enough, indeed, to convince himself that the defection of Conrad, which it was obvious he had in the first instance considered as an insidious violation of the compact between himself and his son, had, in reality, not originated in any seduction employed by the latter. That Count Siegendorf had in consequence of this conviction again written to Hamburg, to re-establish the correspondence and remittances there upon their former footing, was rendered sufficiently clear by many annexed memorandums. Unhappily the dates of these second letters proved them to have been dispatched too late: they were among the last acts of his life, and reached not their destination till he for whose advantage

they were intended had studiously escaped all research, and was on his way to Silesia. The remaining papers of the afflicted and venerable parent tended therefore only to discover a broken heart—a heart deeply lacerated by his son, and finally broken by some inexplicable misconduct on the part of Conrad. What an image to present to his eyes who was now in turn become a father, and who had already learnt to fear that he might not prove a happy one!

Awful were the phantoms which midnight and deep contrition united to call up before the imagination of the Count: and it was at the very climax of his worldly prosperity that the spectre of conscience first appeared to him. He banished it, and strove by a more regular examination of the papers to detect some error that might at least dispel a part of his inquietude. His researches were fruitless: every succeeding

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ing memorandum but proved more incontestably that the fatal billet sent to Hamburg, which consigned him to poverty—nay, in its effect, almost to madness—had been written immediately under the influence of a resentment excited in his father by the desertion of Conrad; and that he had himself consequently owed to the imprudence of the latter in quitting Bohemia the most afflicting calamity of his life.—Yet that imprudence, fatal as it proved, and sullied as it possibly had been by errors of a less venial nature, was, at worst, in itself only the pardonable consequence of filial fondness and duty! at least thus officiously argued the heart of the Count.—Aye indeed! Who testified this?—Conrad! and *Conrad only!*—but his subsequent conduct had confirmed it!—How? in what instance?—He had adopted the cause of his family:—Was it not his own?—By an effort of painful and humiliating duplicity



he had extricated his father from disgrace:—Could any thing but his father's personal appearance at Prague have saved him from that of illegitimacy?—He had restored the latter to his hereditary rights and honours:—Not so!—he had indeed assisted in giving him liberty: or rather he had lengthened his chain. He had bound him by a solemn promise, which nothing but the exigency of circumstances had induced the Count to violate, to attend his own arrival at Carlsbad.—When that promise *was* violated, when Conrad *did* arrive, not at Carlsbad, indeed, but at the castle of Siegendorf, and found his father invested by the state with unlimited possession, did his countenance announce *his* share in the general joy?—Did his voice rise with the general acclamation?—Alas, no!—It was precisely at that critical moment the Count had learnt to doubt. Conrad, ever meditative and observing from the first hour he had

had presented himself to his parents, had on the second occasion, however different the circumstances, manifested the same gloom, the same abstraction, the same haughty distrust. He neither appeared to give, nor take joy: every eye had sunk before his, and every voice had been hushed into silence. Neither his youth, the grandeur of his person, nor that lustre which attends the rights of an heir, had created any exultation at his presence. Even the most indulgent of his parents had discovered that he was not beloved; and the feelings of both had secretly assigned the reason—he was not capable of loving.

But although the exterior of Conrad dazzled not the eyes of dispassionate observers, the Count had now learnt to suspect that it might too successfully have misled the hearts of Josephine and himself; or rather that those tender hearts had been

duped by their own sensibility, and that the agitating moment of their son's appearance at M—— had converted into an angel of light the being who shone upon them amidst such a gloom. It was even because he was not a hypocrite that he had, perhaps, best deceived them: the character of his mind accorded too well with every circumstance of time and place; and when to smile would have been to insult their feelings, was it necessary to disguise his own? Such were the reflections of Siegen-dorf; which, like a stream swelled by many small and invisible springs, now suddenly acquired the force of a torrent, and rushed forward with irresistible rapidity. He still held the papers in his hand; but he read them not—he saw them not. Questions which even in the bosom of misery, and during their short meetings at M——, had not escaped him, now past in tumultuous succession through his memory. If Con-  
rad

rad really fought his father, why was he found wandering so far from the track that should have led to him? By what accident was a being so detestable as the Hungarian his associate? and wherefore did he bury beneath an obscure appearance his own name and condition in life? During the short and anxious meetings that preceded the Count's departure from Silesia, some cruelly impending evil had ever banished those interesting subjects on which the ear of affection delights to dwell. The details of Conrad had necessarily been then concise and imperfect: there was even a sort of anticipated pleasure in permitting them to be so. The narrative of the past was suspended to enrich the future—to fill up many an evening of social and domestic intercourse with that innocent but exquisite luxury which arises to tender hearts when they interchange their history and their feelings. Those hours of leisure

were



were now come, but they had not brought the pleasure which should have gilded them. Conrad, after the first meeting between himself and his father, had been little at the castle of Siegendorf. His manners, when there, were forbidding; his communications cold and unsatisfactory: he sought no intercourse; he desired no confidence; he delighted only, as it appeared, in such sports or exercises as withdrew him from his parents; and behind the more prominent features of his character a discerning eye might perceive some, which thrown, as it were, into dark shadow, inspired an apprehension the more acute from their very indistinctness.—Alas! was such then in reality the darling son of Siegendorf; the promised comforter of his future life; the cherished being on whom he had gazed in childhood, and so ardently desired to elevate to that point where fortune in very malice had now placed him!

That

That Conrad was placed in a sphere far beyond his mother's influence, Josephine was also deeply sensible ; but her affliction was little tinged with surprise. The habits of her mind, unlike those of Siegendorf, ever leading her to discriminate the sensations and opinions of others, created that nice perception of character to which he was a stranger.—By an effect therefore less of judgment than of feeling, she quickly understood that of Conrad ; and though sensible that there might have been hearts over which hers would have possessed an influence at almost any period of life, she perceived his was not of that description. This, with many other sorrows, alike impossible to obviate, she endeavoured to forget ; or rather to confine to the sanctuary of her own bosom : for Josephine was no longer the creature of philosophy and solitude. Agitated incessantly by the turbulence of Siegendorf's character, and thrown  
back

back upon herself, she had contemplated with an aching sensibility, and an observing judgment, that mass of passion, inconsistency, and suffering, by which life is disfigured. Successive conflicts had insensibly given to her own character a deeper, but a softer shade; and if it did not appear tintured with sadness, it was because sadness itself took the colour of resignation. The first fond love of a virtuous woman's heart is, nevertheless, a tenacious sentiment: hers, sanctified by every tie, had survived almost every disappointment. In ceasing, therefore, to feel with her husband, she had not ceased to feel for him; and the affections ever in some degree reward themselves, by the animating principle they create throughout the bosoms in which they are deeply felt.

Possessed as Josephine was with the belief that Siegendorf's wishes were at length amply gratified by the resumption of his patrimonial

patrimonial rights ; that Stralenheim had withdrawn his pretensions from a conviction of their inutility ; and that nothing stood between the Count and all he could desire of happiness but the disposition of his mind, and a shade of displeasure towards his son, she earnestly strove to correct the one, and to palliate the bitterness of the other. Magnificence, as far as it respected her own gratification, she had never yet coveted. The first sorrow that ever assailed her had been introduced by the remote prospect of it ; but she believed it necessary to the felicity of her husband, and, therefore, had rejoiced in the acquisition. It was consequently with surprise, as well as regret, that she saw its effect upon their different characters ; and felt, that, while it elevated one, it depressed the other. By multiplying her sympathies, and extending her benevolence, it indeed afforded her a new spring of existence ; while in him it seemed gradually

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to increase the apathy of a joyless and exhausted heart.

Joyless, indeed, was the heart of Siegen-dorf!—nor could either the splendor of art, or the beauties of nature, fill up the void. To him

“The disenchanting earth lost all its lustre.”

He had himself embittered the paradise around, and found it impossible to banish ideas that were his torment. The Count had quitted Bohemia in the plenitude of health and vigor—every appetite and passion alike ripe for enjoyment, and impatient of restraint. Since those days of inebriation, half the circle of life had revolved, and its irresistible progress had placed him precisely in that sphere of existence his father formerly occupied. Conrad now filled his. In all, save identity of persons, they were the same;—too much  
resembling

resembling in the tenor, though not in the features of their characters. But life no longer presented to Siegendorf those allurements which in early youth had rendered him indifferent to the value of the affections; and, from the moment he had regained Conrad, it had, therefore, been among the most passionate wishes of his heart to be beloved by him. This wish was, however, defeated by the very first meeting between himself and his son: for Conrad, it had been evident, from that moment, neither loved nor esteemed his father:—the past, therefore, became a blank, and the future a field of anxious and fearful apprehension:—a melancholy, deep, silent, unconquerable, took possession of the mind of the Count, as he continued to meditate on both: a melancholy so nearly allied to remorse, as to find food for the latter even in what appeared only the common chance of circumstances: for he insensibly

sensibly began to persuade himself that it communicated its influence to every thing within his circle : nor was the observation founded on chimera, whatever the application might be. His castle no longer wore the same aspect of cheerfulness with which it had greeted him :—his followers and domestic retinue strangely diminished : their places were supplied by persons unknown to him, and by whom he had no appearance of being beloved. The crowds that had returned to his estates with alacrity, that had officiously sought his presence, and implored to be admitted under his protection, either fulfilled their duties with coldness, or silently abandoned them : the voice of joy was no longer heard, and industry no longer exerted itself : while even the domestic retinue past silently through the apartments of the castle, and seemed mutually to distrust each other.

The

The mind and constitution of Siegendorf became shaken : and such was the irritable state of his nerves, that a thousand wild, chimerical, and even superstitious fears, assailed him by turns. Was Slander busy with his name ? Did any secret whisper from Idenstein or the Intendant remotely pursue his footsteps ?—Was the Hungarian at hand to plan fresh scenes of blood ? Or did the spirit of Stralenheim walk abroad, to wither the prosperity of that man who had opened the door of murder upon him ?—Every method taken to trace the evil to its source, for an evil it too obviously was,—proved alike unsuccessful. Superstition did not, even on the minutest investigation, appear to have peopled the castle within ; no enemy threatened the person of the Count without ; yet a secret and inexplicable curse seemed to hang over its walls, and the miserable Siegendorf was at length obliged to conclude that it was the malediction of a father !



Unable to controul or endure these gloomy ideas, the Count at length quitted his own estates, and fixed his temporary residence at Prague. He was received there by the ministers of the Imperial court with a distinction eminently flattering to his public character, and which, if it afforded no real solace to his feelings, at least diminished their acuteness, and forced him upon occupations that expelled the eternal recollection of himself. He had now reached the full maturity of life: and the intense thought that marked his features, insensibly imprest those around with the deference due to a superior mind. Devoid alike of arrogance or ambition, yet rising gradually to every honour that could gratify either, he seemed to live, while yet in the world, like a man whose soul is already beyond it: and through an effect of that singular deception sometimes produced by invisible causes, those who penetrated not beyond the surface soon accustomed themselves to  
look

look upon Count Siegendorf as not only amidst the most prosperous, but the most meritorious of the favourites of fortune. All hearts but one seemed to hail and applaud him: yet to that only one, the esteem of which he feared he had irrecoverably lost, his invariably turned, with a tenacious fondness that was fated to be his scourge.

But while sadness and desolation thus reigned within the immediate circle where the Count had hoped to find joy, she appeared to have taken up her residence where desolation had indeed long prevailed. The kingdom, torn by a series of fierce and bloody contests, prepared at length to enjoy the peace for which it ardently panted. The preliminaries, so long in agitation, had in the bare prospect awakened the spirit of the people; and the ratification, recently signed, communicated that transport peculiar to a suffering multitude. A day of festivity

was appointed: solemn thanks, and every ceremony religious or civil, was ordered to attend it; and man, in recovering a blessing of which he so often voluntarily deprives himself, seemed to believe he could want no other.

The rank and indispensable duties of the Count called him early from his palace; though a fluctuating state of health, and a deep depression of spirits, little disposed him to share the activity he found abroad. At sun-rise every window of the city had been decorated with flowers or streamers: frankincense from the censers perfumed the air; consecrated images were offered with devout awe from hand to hand; and processions of the various religious orders were seen passing in different directions. The attention of the multitude was, however, chiefly engaged by that of the States, which moved solemnly towards the great church,

church, attended by the imperial and national guards, and composed of all that was most splendid or illustrious in the kingdom. Spacious as was the building, it was immediately filled. The nobles, the populace, youth — age — an immense concourse, quickly hastened in: the doors were then closed, and the hum and press of the multitude insensibly subsided to a low murmur: —that ceased!—every knee was bowed—every head was devoutly inclined downwards; while the various military bands played some of those sacred and almost divine airs which supply language to the soul when she faints under the want of it. Happy for each individual had this sentiment of devotion, so grand and impressive in the exterior, conveyed its purifying influence to the heart! That of Siegendorf was deeply moved. No word, indeed, escaped his lips: but while the long here and hereafter passed through his imagina-



tion, the silent and secret aspiration they dictated was not unheard. From the posture in which he had mechanically continued, the Count was at length roused by the rush of the multitude around, and the grand burst of the *Te Deum*. He arose with the rest; when, casting his eye, like them, upon the long though distant line of human faces beneath, he suddenly fancied he saw that of the Hungarian amongst them.—A mist obscured the sight of Siegendorf, and a shock like that of electricity ran through his frame. So deep, indeed, had been the abstraction of his mind, that the revulsion of the senses was almost too mighty for his bodily strength. By a vigorous effort he recovered his powers of perception, and again eagerly looked forward. But the crowd had in the interim moved toward the gates. The sway and pressure caused every space to be immediately occupied by new-comers, nor could the

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the most penetrating gaze ascertain the place or features of an individual!

Those turbulent passions, once so habitual in the character of the Count, now impatiently strove again to burst forth. Vainly, however, did he look above, around, below, for some sympathising bosom, some answering eye, that could at once catch and comprehend all that his would have conveyed. Encumbered with pomp and empty distinction, he found it equally impossible to quit his own rank, or even summon Conrad from the distant one in which he was stationed. The train meantime continued to move on, and the Count was reduced still to make a part of that pageantry to which both his senses and his soul were alike insensible. It at length reached the river. The broad expanse of the Muldau was covered with innumerable boats and vessels, which displayed their streamers to the sun,

and with incessant motion dazzled the eye by their brightness and variety. On the summit of the bridge, itself a sublime and commanding spectacle, the elevated banners of the nation were seen to pass, escorted by the younger nobility; while the thunder of their music, which, with a more sprightly movement, swelled above the pitch of that sacred and imposing solemnity it had so lately assumed, was now distinctly heard, amid the trampling of the populace, and the confused shouts of a multitude who at every pause rent the air with joyful acclamations!

Siegenderdorf, after vainly continuing to strain his powers of sight in search of the Hungarian, rested them, at length, on the helmet of Conrad, as it glittered among the rest; and though to exchange a single glance was beyond all force of vision, the anxious father darted his eye forward, as if  
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by a supernatural effort he could make the perturbed feelings of his own bosom known to that of his son.

The name of *Kruitzner*, articulated precisely at this moment, in that low, deep, and deliberate tone which makes itself heard even amid general clamour, suddenly arrested the attention of the Count. Without sufficient presence of mind to recollect that by recognising the name he identified himself, Siegendorf turned hastily towards the speaker, and within the distance of a very few paces again beheld the features of the Hungarian. He was not to be mistaken. He wore the dress of his country, and fixed upon the Count a glance so worldly and alarming as caused the heart of the latter to start, as it were, from its place, and involuntarily to stand upon the defensive. Siegendorf perceiving him again about to escape among the multitude, stretched out his arm to detain



detain him: but the strong emotion of his own mind caused him at the same moment to stagger; and as the accompanying change of countenance announced an indisposition that almost approached to swooning, the action was misconstrued. The zeal of those near made them press closely around; and before his powers of recollection returned he found himself dragged, not merely from the spot, but even from all probability of regaining it. The fact was, however, indubitable: the recognition had been even mutual: and the Count saw a horrible and indefinite evil impending over his head, by the uncertain expectation of which life, and every good it could bestow, must of necessity be blasted. Of earthly goods, his honour and his estimation in society were now become the dearest; yet was it exactly those, perhaps indeed those only, of which the Hungarian might deprive him!—The unsettled but gloomy sentiment that had so  
long

long harassed the bosom of Siegendorf, uniting with the tumultuous feelings of the moment, now rose to a point of almost desperate energy. He could not fly to Josephine for solace. She was happily ignorant of the dark and complicated history his recollections involved. The feelings of Conrad he had but too much reason to know rarely accorded with his. It was, nevertheless, to Conrad—and to Conrad only, he could venture to communicate them! . Yet even this relief was denied; for the latter, though summoned, was many hours before he appeared.

The Count, meantime, solitary in the midst of his palace, grew every succeeding moment more and more a prey to the irritability of his feelings; till nothing predominated but an unextinguishable desire to appease them by assuring himself at least of the person of the Hungarian. To accomplish  
this,

this, however, required, apparently, a method and deliberation to which he was little equal: he chose out, nevertheless, such of his domestics as he could best confide in; and describing with minuteness the dress and figure of the man he sought, enjoined them to make such inquiries as might at least ascertain his pursuits and his residence. Their absence was long, and their researches fruitless. The return of Conrad in the interim, earnestly as it had been desired, afforded little relief to the agitated heart of his father; who found it impossible to make him enter into the feelings by which he was himself actuated; and who even felt that he had no right to expect that he should do so. Conrad, in remaining at M——, so long after the departure of the Count, had amply discharged all due to honour and to justice. It was Siegendorf alone who had shrunk from what either dictated. It was he who had deserted the

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the defence of his own rectitude; who had left to his son a painful responsibility, for which, as it appeared, no gratitude could reward him: an odious tax of duplicity and meanness, that had debased the minds of both, and created a spirit of distrust and alienation time itself seemed unable to remove. Was it then the part of Siegendorf to resent that his son could not sympathise with him? Ah! had he not much more reason to regret that he had not earlier sympathised with his son?

While the Count was thus secretly tortured by feelings which retrospection and an inflamed sensibility had long since engendered, day insensibly began to close, and the events of the morning were almost driven from his thoughts by the deep and varied contemplations that engrossed them; when his domestics, in announcing the request of a stranger to see him, at once recalled



recalled the whole. The Count, struck with a sudden conviction that he was on the point of receiving some tidings of the man he sought, commanded, without hesitation, that the inquirer should be admitted: the doors were instantly thrown open by his attendants; and, to the utter astonishment of Siegendorf, the Hungarian himself appeared at the threshold. He advanced a few steps, and then looked earnestly around, with the air of a man who receives a deep impression from the scene before him, though not exactly that of common or vulgar surprise. To him who recollected the circumstances under which the parties present had before met, those of the moment were indeed calculated to create a sensation not easily conquered.

They stood in the inner but most magnificent hall of the palace. It was of Gothic architecture, grand, spacious, and gloomy.

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The last rays of a western sun shot obliquely between the massy pillars, and gilded the trophies and banners of the family of Siegendorf as they were suspended around. The Count himself was at the upper end. He was splendidly habited for the ceremony of the morning, and the insignia of various orders with which he had been invested sparkled at his bosom. Conrad, so lately entered, had not yet thrown aside the high military plume or the sabre by which the younger nobility had been universally distinguished; and the appearance of both was in singular contrast to the simple, though characteristic garb of the Hungarian, who stood in dark shadow below.

"*It is Kruitzner,*" again repeated the latter, in a tone of slow and deliberate interrogation. The Count, who scorned longer to dissemble, inclined his head with a token of acquiescence. While Conrad,  
in

in astonishment at the scene, folded his arms, and, drawing near, fixed a steady gaze on the inquirer. The Hungarian again looked around, as if, satisfied at length of the identity of the persons, he was comparing what he saw with what he recollected: then advancing, with no less firmness than before, "Your people," said he, "I understand, have made inquiries concerning me:—I am here!"—

There was a simplicity both in the speech, and the manner of delivering it, that staggered the Count. But he recovered his presence of mind; and, by a proud effort, strove to assume that self-possession which seemed to mark the Hungarian.

"It was by my order that you were fought," said he: "The monitor within will sufficiently explain my motive!—You stand suspected of an atrocious crime:—Acquit yourself—

yourself—or prepare to attend its consequences.”

“ I come to meet them :—Who are my accusers ? ”—

Siegendorf hesitated.

“ The general voice :—mine in particular :—the time—the place—and every probability that authorises either internal or presumptive evidence.”

“ Did these attach suspicion to no other name than mine ?—Recollect well before you speak ! ”

“ Prevaricator ! ” exclaimed the Count, roused to his accustomed pride and fierceness by the implied accusation.—“ Of all existing beings,” pursued he, after an agitating pause, “ you best can attest the in-



nocence of the man you allude to.—But I hold no other conference with a murderer than that which an overwhelming sense of equity demands of me. Answer directly to my charge.”

“ I deny the crime altogether !”

“ Upon what ground ?”

“ Because I know the criminal.”

“ Name him !”

“ He stands beside you !”—and he pointed to Conrad.—The Count who had roused his whole soul to dare the accusation in his own person, recoiled speechless and aghast. But perceiving Conrad start forward to aim a desperate vengeance at his accuser, he threw himself without hesitation between them.

“ Liar

“Liar and defamer!” exclaimed Siegendorf. “This,” he added, turning to his son, “is indeed a calumny so monstrous, that I was not prepared for it!”—The lip of Conrad was pale: his eyes rolled with a singular expression; and there was that in his features which struck a chord within his father’s bosom that never yet had vibrated. He saw them convulsed, as they had appeared by star-light in the Prince’s garden at M——; and both the heart and countenance of Siegendorf for a moment fell.

“Count,” said the Hungarian, who attentively scrutinised the looks of the latter, “I came hither with no light or fluctuating resolution.—Yet let me premise that I sought not this occasion; nor was it even possible for me so to do. When I knelt with the multitude in the great church, curiosity alone attracted me thither. By

what extraordinary calculation, indeed, could I suspect that among senators and nobles I should behold the forlorn and destitute Kruitznér? By what calculation still more extraordinary could I guess that, under such circumstances, he would ever again desire to behold me?—He *has* desired it; and we have met.—Before we proceed further, answer me at once who profited by the murder of Baron Stralenheim? Was it the man, think ye, who became immediately after an outcast and a beggar? The Baron, *on that occasion*, lost neither gold nor jewels; it was his life only the assassin sought; and that life was the sole bar to a rich and contested inheritance!”

“These,” said the Count, again fired by interrogations which he felt to be equally fallacious and inconclusive, “are surmises that attach no less to myself than to my son.”

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“Be it so!—Let the issue light on him amongst us whose soul secretly acknowledges the guilt! It is to you only, Count Siegendorf, I now speak. You are my accuser and self-created judge. Beware, therefore, how you incur the penalty of collusive guilt!—I have submitted voluntarily to your tribunal; and, remember, I demand justice from you, as you expect it either here or hereafter!—My narrative,” continued he, perceiving the Count had no words to interrupt him, “will be long: it will include a period to the events of which you are probably a stranger, and an accusation no less deadly to your peace than that you have already heard. *Dare* you protect me?—*Dare* you enjoin me to proceed?”

Siegendorf would have spoken, but his lips refused their office. He once more motioned with his head however in acqui-



escence ; yet was there something savage and alarming in the tone of the Hungarian, at which his soul indignantly, though apprehensively, revolted. Conrad, whom it seemed to have roused, awakened to curiosity by the whole of this extraordinary exordium, leant with an undaunted and contemptuous air against the pillar near which he stood. He had detached his sabre from his side, and occupied himself in forming fantastic lines with it on the marble below. Now and then he half unsheathed it, and seemed curiously to examine its polish,

“ I am unarmed, Count,” said the Hungarian, who kept a watchful and steady eye upon him :—“ Command your son to lay aside his weapon.”—Conrad smiled disdainfully, and, returning the sabre to its scabbard, threw it some paces from him.

“ Proceed safely,” said he : “ the tale  
will,

will, no doubt, be worthy of the relater :— but is it worthy of my father to listen to it?”

The Count, who had recovered from the first shock of an over-anxious mind, and more deliberately weighed the dark and suspicious character of the man before him, penetrated by this indirect reproach, extended his hand fondly towards his son in token of unshaken confidence and love. The brow of the Hungarian changed: it seemed to be among his peculiar characteristics to analyse exactly every transition of sentiment in the bosoms of those around him; and by an instantaneous impression he felt that he stood on different ground both with father and son from that he had occupied a few moments before. His own purpose seemed shaken, and he paused for a considerable time before he proceeded further.

“It will be unnecessary,” said he at length, “to enter into any detail that respects only myself.—I was thrown early upon the world, and am what it has made me!—Circumstances induced me to spend the winter that preceded your arrival at M—— at Frankfort on the Oder. I lived obscurely; but I occasionally frequented the coffee-houses and other public meetings, and I generally, therefore, knew something of what was passing in the city. Towards the middle of the month of February a singular occurrence engaged attention, and formed the common topic of discourse there. A military party had secured, upon the borders of Lusatia, a desperate band of men who were conjectured to be marauders from the Austrian camps. It proved otherwise, however; for further investigation left little room to doubt that they were part of a more wanton and lawless association which in-

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fested the forests of Bohemia, and whom either accident, or savage audacity, had carried beyond their accustomed haunts. Some among them were reported to be of distinguished rank, and military vengeance had been, therefore, suspended: they were escorted through different out-posts, and placed, at length, within the jurisdiction of the civil magistrates at Frankfort.—Of *their* fate I know nothing!”—Siegendorf breathed, but it was only to be doubly roused by what followed.—“The curiosity it had excited seemed suddenly to die away, or to be authoritatively silenced; and there was only a certain limit within which rumour still dared to whisper tidings concerning it, or rather to condense all in the wonderful report she gave of one man amongst them. His birth and fortune were said to be princely: miraculous stories were related both of his natural and acquired endowments: his person was exaggerated to  
some-



something super-human both as to strength and to beauty ; his prowess was deemed unrivalled ; and his influence, not only over his associates, but even with those who should have been his judges, was represented to be almost that of witchcraft. I had no faith in the influence of any advantage where the latter were concerned, but that of wealth ; and I, therefore, concluded he was rich. My curiosity, as well as some other feelings, was excited ; and I made it my employment to seek out this extraordinary and mysterious being. Such, however, was the awe he inspired through the protection afforded him by the police, that though I suspected many within my circle of knowing his person, none dared to identify it to me. I was left to the burnings of my own impatience, when by accident, and in the public square, I encountered your son. It was a popular affray that drew us together, but it happened to  
be

be one of those singular occasions when the human mind breaks loose from the fetters of habit and society, and betrays its character upon the countenance.—My eye no sooner fell upon his, than I said to myself “this is the man!” He was then, as since, with the nobles of the city; but I, nevertheless, felt that I was not mistaken. I watched him long and closely: I compared what I had been told with what I then observed. I examined his person, his gesture, the varying expression of his features; I noted down in my memory all those minute characteristics which pass unobserved by common perception; and amid every natural or acquired endowment, I believed I discerned the feelings of a gladiator and the eye of an assassin.”

Siegenderdorf, who had “drank poisons” as the Hungarian continued to speak, started from his seat at the concluding sentence  
with

with a desperation almost approaching to phrensy.—Not so Conrad! who, collected within himself, motioned to his father to be silent: and, turning full towards the Hungarian, prepared with steady, but intense curiosity, to hear the rest.

“I now believed I had found the sort of man I had long fought; and having, by indefatigable perseverance, at length gained circumstantial information on this point, I waited my opportunity, and introduced myself to his notice. I had no difficulty,” added he, with a malicious smile, “in perceiving that my attentions were not desirable, but I was not to be repelled: the more he strove to disencumber himself of me, the more I felt persuaded of the truth of my own calculations. It was upon men like him that I had seen the less lucky or less daring of their fellow beings fated to depend; and I felt an ill-founded assurance, as it  
afterwards

afterwards proved, that I had discovered my point of fortune.—The nameless and inexplicable shadow that thus haunted the footsteps of your son soon became, as I believed it would do, a scourge and an oppression to him: but I grew at length familiar to his eye, and he seemed to understand my meaning. He was on the point of secretly withdrawing from Frankfort. I discovered this: our intercourse increased: my hopes increased with it: and though I could not fathom the motives of his irregular conduct, I learnt enough from his habits and education to doubt my own sagacity with regard to his real condition in life. Be that what it might, it was such as could not but be advantageous to mine: and acting under this conviction, I made myself, less I must confess by his choice than sufferance, the companion of his journey to Silesia. You are no stranger, Count, to the event that rendered us mutually serviceable



viceable to Baron Stralenheim on the banks of the Oder; nor to the indiscreet gratitude of the latter, through which we became inmates of the Prince's house at M——. How extraordinary! how memorable to all were the scenes that passed there!”

The Hungarian made a solemn pause; as if revolving within himself the manner in which he should proceed. Conrad, with stern, but almost breathless impatience, seemed to attend the result; while Siegen-dorf, who in the frightful story of the past perceived an alarming connection with the hints afforded by his father's papers, had hardly vigour enough left to rouse himself to the last deciding testimony:—yet his heart still beat fondly towards his son, and revolted from a being who, despicable even by his own confession, was stained with every evidence of circumstantial guilt.

“Your

“Your story is excellent,” said Conrad at length. “Proceed!”

“It will improve,” replied the Hungarian, bitterly.—“Miserable young man! You do not yet then see—you do not even yet then conjecture, the invisible eye that was open upon your actions?—I was your dupe, indeed, at M——, for I began at length to believe you my friend.—You introduced me to your father: he was insignificant—miserable—degraded!—foiled with all the exterior debasements of poverty: but I was not so new to life as not to see in him an extraordinary man. Through your means, or his, I became the victim of a disgraceful calumny!—Woe to the worthless heart that inflicts on another the penalty of its own crimes!—Most heavily will yours rebound upon you both!”—As if roused by the acute recollection of personal indignity, the Hungarian poured out this denunciation  
in

in a tone so forcible as struck to the inmost souls of his hearers.—“Such,” continued he, after a momentary pause, “was the apparent disparity of circumstances between Kruitznor and yourself, as left it impossible for me to guess the nature of your connection with him : but I quickly perceived there was some. I weighed—I calculated—I conjectured !—I knew too well the ground I stood upon with you, to suspect you of real kindness or generosity : wherefore then did you protect me from Stralenheim and the Intendant ? Some unfathomable project—some dear and high-wrought interest was at stake : but it was evidently one in which I was to have no share. I quitted the house to give you leisure to construct it. I returned to mark its progress. The momentary prattle of a baby gave me to understand that his father had once been concealed in the chamber where I slept.—The secret then lay *there* !

—Do

—Do you start?" said he to Conrad, who did indeed betray some emotion: "Now mark the end!—I returned to your father—obviously a most unwelcome guest; though I was yet at a loss to conjecture wherefore. I met you on my way, and you urged me to remain under his roof another night. My soul half acquitted you of a share in the mystery upon this evidence of apparent frankness. I was yet to learn that you were the very master-dæmon, and moving spring of all; and that while you courted, it was for the purpose of plunging me into perdition.—Midnight came:—I arose, and, examining my chamber, found I had divined the truth. My course of life had made me acquainted with the courts of princes, and the mysteries of their intrigues. Pressing the spring of the secret door, I found myself in the gallery adjoining to it. Recollection of the



Baron's losses, and the poverty of Kruitznér, then directed all my suspicions towards him ; and I was credulous enough to acquit you. I had no light, but an irresistible curiosity impelled me forwards. Suddenly I heard a noise : it resembled a groan ; low-murmured, but distinct. I stopt—listened—turned every way to ascertain whence the sound issued :—but it was not repeated. In the attitude of listening I lost my recollection, and knew not whether I had advanced or was retreating :—yet my hand touched the pannel of a door, and it was necessary to determine whither it led. My risk was however evident. I drew back, therefore, only as much of the partition as formed a crevice ; but my hair stood erect on my head, and my blood froze in my veins, when through it I saw the yet bleeding body of Stralenheim !”

“ But

“ But you saw not the murderer !” exclaimed the Count, in a tone of supernatural vehemence.

“ He was not, at that moment, in the room : but the locks of the Baron’s apartment had been changed chiefly under his inspection the day before, and he had doubtless possessed himself of a master-key ; for the door of the ante-room was ajar. I saw a man bathing his hands in water : their colour bore horrible testimony against him : at intervals he raised his head, and looked anxiously towards Stralenheim :—a lamp stood on the table close by, and its pale but steady light then showed me distinctly the features of your son.—Have I said enough ?” continued he, directing a penetrating glance towards Conrad ; “ or does a father’s eye and heart want further confirmation ?—Yet hear me to the end,” he added, abruptly arresting the attention

of both, which he perceived was on the point of utterly failing. "Something, Count Siegendorf, is yet due to you!—you, who, in the first tumult and agitation of my soul, I doubted not to be an accomplice in the crime.—I saw myself at once its victim. I saw at once why I had been by him persuaded to return; and I concluded that I had been purposely stationed by you in the suspicious chamber. For a moment I hesitated upon my conduct; but I was unarmed, and no match at any time for your son in personal address or strength. He too had rendered himself the trusted friend of the Baron; I, at the best, had entered his chamber by subtlety and stealth.—It would be impossible to describe the feelings with which I returned to my own. Josephine and her babe were yet within my power. I provided myself with the dagger which I wore commonly at my girdle; and had Kruitznor, by being absent,

sent,

lent, confirmed my suspicions, I know not what the bloody vengeance and despair that then possessed my soul would have dictated. But when I past through his chamber, and saw the watch-light dimly burning, while the family group was buried in a tranquil slumber, I exclaimed to myself—‘Peace be with you miserable innocents!—ye know not what the morning will awaken you to!’

“ Self-preservation now called loudly upon me; and hurrying from scenes in which I should infallibly have fallen a sacrifice, I concealed myself in the hollows of the mountains of Bohemia. I there learnt enough to ascertain that all power was in the hands of the murderer: and, though by some act of, to me, inscrutable foresight, Kruitznor and his family had, indeed, escaped every thing but infamy, I could gain no further tidings concerning them.



I concluded, therefore, that they had buried both their miseries and their poverty in some far distant country. Their sorrows, and my own experience, sufficiently warned me of the merciless character of the man we had to do with; and I finally withdrew from the neighbourhood. I lost sight of him altogether. *Him*, indeed, I never more desired to see:—yet my eye sometimes explored the habitations of famine and penury in search of Kruitznor. What then were my emotions, when I lifted it suddenly upon him in the person of Count Siegendorf!—what my conclusions, when a more minute inquiry gave me to understand the relation between him and Baron Stralenheim! Yet my soul acquits *you*, Count, of the crime.—Guilt sleeps not as you did, the night on which it was committed; and it is upon the faith of that acquittal I ventured hither.—You now know the extent of the secret I am possessed of!—

*Consider*

*Consider its value well before you dismiss me."*

Siegendorf, to whose jarred and perturbed faculties the latter part of the Hungarian's discourse had been nearly lost, started with confused recollections, when the voice ceased to sound in his ear. Alas ! of what importance to the Count did his own guilt or innocence appear !—Conrad, a savage and a murderer !—Conrad, his soul fraught with horrors, and his hands dipt in blood, had been the only distinct image that for a time swam before the eyes of the suffering father !—Suspicion or acquittal—wealth—honours—life itself, with all its various and fluctuating scenes, had given place to this horrible one. Absorbed in the contemplation of it, the Count had, for a considerable period, lost all sense of identity, all power of judging or comparing. He was like a man in whom little more than

animal life remains, but who starts at intervals under the lash of torture, and awakens to a frightful consciousness, from which he again willingly relapses to stupefaction.

This state of mental inanity he was unexpectedly roused from by the concluding address of the Hungarian. The few words in which it was couched presented a hope that seemed in itself the renovation of existence. If the accuser of Conrad were thus venal, Conrad himself was doubtless innocent!—Plausible as was the tale, circumstantially as it had been related, and deep as was its impression, it rested at last on the testimony but of one man; and that one among the most worthless of his species. Leaving behind every adventitious circumstance calculated to confirm his fears, the Count past with the rapidity of lightning to all that could dissipate them.

The

The first hateful impression he had conceived of the Hungarian—the subsequent dissimulation of the latter—the implied baseness of his past life, the avowed meanness of his present, were all so many evidences against him. The last sordid appeal was in itself conclusive! He who was to be bought was surely not to be believed! Believed, too, against whom?—a darling, an almost adored son, who, had he been even guilty, the miserable Count felt too closely entwined with every fibre of his heart to be torn from it without agony.

Siegenderdorf, with that vehemence of feeling which sees no medium between desperation and security, at once clung to the latter. Yet while thus, by a violent effort repelling the worst of his fears, a numerous train, sufficiently alarming, though subordinate, started up to supply their place. In proportion to the villany of the Hungarian,



Hungarian, the magnitude of those evils which surrounded the future fate of Conrad and himself would inevitably increase ! —Both were in the power of an incendiary, who could torture if he could not crush ; —who might so speciously blend truth and falsehood, as to defeat the clearest judgment, and the most impartial heart ; —who beheld, for the first time, in the splendid fortunes of the family of Siegendorf, an allurements to plunder, of which he had hitherto been ignorant ; and who, like the beast that scents blood, would too probably be satisfied only when he has glutted. The imagination of the Count, now directed from that fearful image which had before swallowed up all the faculties of his soul, saw, in the clearest and most extended point of view, how much was to be considered — how much to be guarded against ! He threw an anxious and inquiring gaze on Conrad ; but the latter, buried, as it appeared,

peared, in a resentful and proud silence at the hitherto tame acquiescence of his father, seemed willing to leave every thing to the hazard of the moment. Only now and then he measured the Hungarian with his eyes, as an enemy too daring not to excite astonishment. The extraordinary pause that had succeeded the narrative of the latter was at length interrupted by himself.

“Is it vengeance, Count, or justice, on which you meditate so deeply,” said he, with some surprise.

“Neither,” returned Siegendorf. “I am weighing, he added emphatically, “the *nature* and the *value* of your communication.”

“The first needs no comment!—I will speak to the last with the same frankness I have

have hitherto used. My life is a life of hardship and necessity—it is in your power to make it otherwise!—You are affluent, and rank high in the state.”

“I understand you!”

“Not wholly, if I judge by your countenance. You believe me venal, and are not quite convinced I am sincere. It is nevertheless true that circumstances have rendered me both.—Again I repeat—Consider well before you answer me!”

“Dare you attend the event of my deliberation?”

The Hungarian hesitated, and cast his eyes distrustfully on Conrad, who was walking to and fro between the pillars. The latter raised his in return; but, disdainfully withdrawing them again, passed on in silence.

“I pledge

"I pledge my life—my honour—my salvation for your safety within my walls," exclaimed the impatient Count.

"I have yet an additional security," replied the Hungarian, after a moment's meditation. "I did not enter Prague a solitary individual; and there are tongues without that will speak for me, although I should even share the fate of Stralenheim!—Let your deliberation, Count, be short," he added, again glancing towards Conrad: "and be the future at your peril no less than mine!—Where shall I remain?"

Siegenderdorf opened a door that admitted to one turret of the castle, of which he knew all other egress was barred: the Hungarian started, and his presence of mind evidently failed him. He looked around with the air of a man who is conscious that, relying on a sanguine hope, he  
has



has ventured too far, and neither knows how to stand his ground nor to recede; Yet he read truth and security in the countenance of Siegendorf, although not unmingled with contempt. By an excessive effort of dissimulation he, therefore, recovered his equanimity, and made a step towards the spot pointed out to him.

“ My promise is solemn—sacred—irrevocable,” said Siegendorf, seeing him pause again upon the threshold: “ It extends not, however, beyond my own walls.”

“ I accept the conditions,” replied the other.—His eye, while speaking, fell on the sabre of Conrad; and the Count, who perceived it did so, invited him by a look to possess himself of it: he then closed the door of the turret upon him, and advanced hastily towards his son.

“ You

“ You have done well,” said the latter, raising his head at the near approach of his father, “ to listen to this man’s story.—The evil we cannot measure, we cannot guard against :—but it would be fruitless to temporise further—He must be silenced more effectually !”—The Count started.—“ With you,” pursued Conrad, drawing nearer and dropping his voice, “ it would be unwise longer to dissemble—His *narration is true*.—Are you so credulous as never to have guessed this ?” added he, on perceiving the speechless agony of his father—“ or so weak as to tremble at the acknowledgment ? Could it escape you, that, at the hour we met in the garden at M——, nothing short of a discovery during the very act could have made the death of Baron Stralenheim known to any but him who caused it ?—Did it appear probable,” continued he, with the tone of a man who is secretly roused

roused to fury by a consciousness of the horror he inspires, “that if the Prince’s household had really been alarmed, the care of summoning the police should devolve on one who hardly knew an avenue of the town? Or was it credible that such a one should, unsuspected, have loitered on the way? Least of all could it be even possible that Kruitzner, already marked out, and watched, could have escaped unpursued, had he not had many hours the start of suspicion! I sounded—I fathomed your soul both before and at the moment: I doubted whether it was feeble or artificial:—I will own that I thought it the former, or I should have trusted you.—Yet such has been the excess of your apparent credulity, that I have ever at intervals disbelieved its existence!”

“Monster!” exclaimed Siegendorf, frantic with emotion, “what action of my life, what

what sentiment of my soul ever authorised you to suspect that I would abet a deed thus atrocious ?”

“ Father, father,” interrupted Conrad abruptly, and his form seemed to grow before the astonished eyes of the Count, “ beware how you rouse a devil between us that neither may be able to controul !—We are in no temper nor season for domestic dissension. Do you suppose that while your soul has been harrowed up mine has been unmoved ? or that I have really listened to this man’s story with indifference ?—I too can feel for myself :—for what being besides did your example ever teach me to feel ?—Listen to me !” he added, silencing the Count with a wild and alarming tone :—“ If your present condemnation of me be just, I have listened to you at least once too often !—Remember *who* told me, when at M——, that there were crimes rendered venial by the



occasion: *who* painted the excesses of passion as the trespasses of humanity: *who* held the balance suspended before my eyes between the goods of fortune and those of honour: *who* aided the mischief-stirring spirit within me, by showing me a specious probity, secured only by an infirmity of nerves.—Were you so little skilled in human nature as not to know that the man who is at once intemperate and feeble engenders the crimes he does not commit? or is it so wonderful that *I* should dare to act what *you* dared to think?—I have nothing now to do with its guilt or its innocence. It is our mutual interest to avert its consequences. We stood on a precipice down which one of three must inevitably have plunged: for I will not deny that I knew my own situation to be as critical as yours.—I therefore precipitated Stralenheim!—*You* held the torch!—*You* point-

ed out the path!—Show me now that of safety; or let me show it you!”

Siegendorf, past all power of replying, motioned to his son to leave him. But although the unhappy Count spoke not, that active faculty which, defying time, space, debility, and every thing but death, combines, arranges, and tortures at the same moment, was busy within. The extravagance of his indiscretion, the excess indeed of his credulity, the blindness of his self-love, all seemed at once to rise in terrible array before him. Ever palliating his own errors,—ever shutting his eyes on the griefs or the temptations to which alternately they exposed others,—he perceived too late the multiplied calamities created by such a character, and the maze of inextricable misery in which it had involved himself.

“ Let us have done with retrospection,” said Conrad, lowering his tone, as not wholly insensible to the effect his words had produced on his father: “ We have nothing more either to learn or to conceal from each other.—I have courage and partisans; they are even within the walls, though you do not know them !”—Siegen-dorf shuddered. Alas ! these then had been the substitutes for those affectionate and innocent hearts whose welcome had rendered his return to his native domain, in the first instance, so delightful !—these were the baleful spirits before whose influence virtue and industry alike had withered !

“ You are favoured by the State,” pursued Conrad, “ and it will, therefore, take little cognizance of what passes within your jurisdiction: it is for me to guard against distrust beyond it. Preserve an unchanged countenance. Keep your own secret,” he added,

added, glancing emphatically towards the turret; "and without your further interference I will for ever secure you from the indiscretion of a third person."—So saying he left the hall.

Siegendorf, wife too late for happiness, yet felt the necessity of living yet a little longer to honour. Solemnly and sacredly had he pledged his for the safety of the Hungarian: yet he could hardly doubt but the bloody purpose of his son was to destroy him. Nor was this difficult: Conrad, as well as his father, was furnished with keys that would afford an immediate access to the opposite side of the turret: and circumstanced as the Count now found himself even within his own palace walls, no certainty remained of saving the Hungarian but that of instantly liberating him. Siegendorf, actuated by an impulse of honourable desperation, not wholly un-



mingled, however, with an indistinct hope of silencing the accuser, hastily therefore tore the jewels from his bosom and hat, and mounted the steps. The danger that could thus alarm *him* was manifestly too imminent, the prize he offered too valuable, to leave the Hungarian room for hesitation. The few but gloomy moments the latter had already past in solitude afforded him leisure to weigh all the hazards of an enterprise from which, in the temporary exultation of sudden hope and astonishment created at sight of Siegendorf, he had promised himself every thing. The acuteness of his penetration had indeed enabled him to calculate very accurately the character of the Count in some particulars; but the excess of paternal fondness had not been included in that calculation; and he saw with surprise its operation upon his judgment. He began even to suspect that it might in the end prove powerful enough

to

to make him abet what his genuine feelings revolted from, and render him an instrument in the hands of his son to perpetrate that vengeance he had himself thus rashly put within the reach of either.—Under these circumstances the Count's admonition to escape was too perfect a demonstration of the necessity for doing so not to be immediately complied with. The mind of the latter was wrought to a pitch that allowed him not sufficient recollection to enter either into compromise or engagement. Blood alone was before his eyes; and from blood only he desired to avert them, though at the expence of every future good in life.

The unhappy Siegendorf was found by his attendants, not long after the departure of the Hungarian, alone in the turret; stripped of his jewels, speechless and insensible. As it was not doubted but the stranger

had plundered him, a strict search was immediately instituted after the latter. It proved vain; for the Hungarian satisfied with his spoils, or suspecting that by an unwary acceptance of the jewels he had fallen into a snare purposely laid for him, was heard of no more. It was not true, however, that he had either injured or attacked the Count, whose frame had in reality sunk under the struggle of a violent convulsion; but Siegendorf was at no pains to confute an opinion, the probability of which spared him all further explanation; and Conrad, who alone surmised its fallacy, had, on discovering the flight of the Hungarian, immediately quitted the castle.

The internal anguish of Siegendorf, his smothered groans, his deep despair, together with the extraordinary absence of his son, quickly betrayed to Josephine the  
source,

source, though not the extent, of their mutual calamity. For the Count, happily as far as respected her, had learnt to controul his words : or rather the gloomy despondency with which he was oppressed, hopeless of relief, bade him abhor all sympathy. But the grief that thus struck inward soon announced itself to be mortal : his exterior visibly changed under the conflict ; his eyes sunk ; his countenance became hollow : The never-dying worm seemed to have seized upon his heart. With health vanished the pleasures of sense, and with peace those of intellect. The voice of his wife was no longer music to his ear ; and the sacred hope it yet strove to cherish was lost to him. His bosom, like a sullied mirror reflecting every image with its own stains, saw even in the form of the blooming Marcellin only the germ of depravity !

It



It was otherwise with the deeply afflicted but still magnanimous mother : she felt the reality of unblemished rectitude in her own heart, and looked forward therefore with heroic confidence to the probability of its being perpetuated in that of her infant son. Her imagination showed Marcellin imbued with qualities capable of rendering him an instrument in the hands of a beneficent God, to correct the vices, or alleviate the miseries of his fellow creatures. She expected not indeed that, whatever his claims, he would find the world a state of elysium. She felt that, in his progress through it, he must often sympathise with the unwise, and suffer from the unworthy : but she knew how to calculate his resources as well as his trials in this life ; and cherished that pious confidence in another, which alone enables the scale of happiness to preponderate.

Whether

Whether Conrad and his father ever met again, the spirits that have long since plunged into eternity alone can tell: on this side of it they saw each other no more. A considerable period elapsed without realising the hopes or fears of the Count. Continuing during that time to meditate on the character of his son, it seemed, like some hideous shadow, to grow blacker and more gigantic as he gazed at it. Having combined every particular related by the Hungarian with those his father's papers had confusedly announced and his own observation more perfectly assured him of, they formed a whole, alike frightful to his imagination and repulsive to his heart. Still linked, however, to this savage by the mysterious tie of nature, by the indissoluble regulations of society, by the no less forcible though less tender bonds of family interest and honour, all of life that yet lingered in the pulses of  
Siegen-

Siegenderf seemed to draw its nourishment from endless inquiries or conjectures respecting the fate of his son. They had hitherto proved fruitless, when his duty as a senator suddenly made that terrible demand upon his fortitude which the heart of the miserable father had already deprecated. A strong military force, acting under the orders of the state, was deputed to extirpate a banditti that harassed the country on the side next Franconia. The Count, ere the fatal mandate was signed by himself, made every possible effort, even of the most dangerous kind, to ascertain their number and their leaders :—unhappily he learnt both too late :—Conrad, whose savage and ferocious pleasures had led him again to join his former associates, had been cut down in a skirmish, together with many others, amidst the recesses of the forest, by the sabre of an Austrian hussar. He fell indeed undistinguished ; but living or  
dead

dead there was no form like his, and it was recognised, as soon as seen, by the commanding officer.

The final blow was at length struck, and Siegendorf touched the extreme point alike of suffering and of existence. A rapid decay had already enfeebled a frame that seemed formed for duration. In proportion as his passions had once been stormy so had they now sunk into profound stillness. Nor had his constitution vigour to cherish their habitual irritability: the arrow had gone deep into his heart, and the mortified wound ceased to be painful. Consideration for the rank of Conrad, as well as for the affliction of his family, induced the State to consign the trespasses of the former to oblivion: it was, therefore, permitted that he should be privately interred. The grave of his grandfather was opened, and the Count, despite of all remonstrance, attended

in



in person to see the hitherto discordant  
affes finally blended. After contemplating  
the scene with the gaze of one who strives  
to look through it into eternity, he seemed  
to feel that all was painfully expiated, and  
was conveyed from the spot—never more  
to revisit it while vital consciousness re-  
mained.

The disposition of Siegendorf's worldly  
fortune secured his wife and Marcellin  
those honours to which the past life of the  
one, and the succeeding career of the other,  
well entitled them. But never did wealth  
or honours efface from the memory of Jo-  
sephine the husband of her heart—its first  
fond choice—the dear and invariable object  
of all those tender illusions which sanctified  
the period of youth and love! The emaciated  
form which hardly any other eye had re-  
cognised, became, even when laid in dust  
most precious to her recollection! The  
lowest

lowest whisper of a voice inaudible to every other ear was yet distinct to hers, as long as breath and pulsation allowed it to articulate a sound. Breath and pulsation at length failed: the tranquillised spirit of Siegendorf was exhaled upon the bosom of his better angel: and though sent too late to teach him how to live, she succeeded in preparing him to die.

The Count expired in the forty-eighth year of his age, and amidst the plenitude of all those enjoyments in which he had once sought felicity: Yet, through a singular chance, doubtless aided by afflicting recollections, precisely six-and-twenty years from the day on which he first quitted Bohemia. He was buried in the same vault with his father and Conrad.—If the measure of his misfortunes should appear to exceed that of his errors, let it be remembered how easily both might have been avoided: Since an

adherence to his duties at almost any one period of his life would have spared him more than half its sufferings.

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THE  
SCOTSMAN'S TALE.

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*CLAUDINA.*

So shall I court thy dearest truth,  
When beauty can no more engage :  
So, thinking of thy charming youth,  
I'll love it o'er again in age.

Prior.

A MAN may travel a good many miles without meeting with an adventure. Nay, if he be a man of business, the chances are ten to one that he may never meet with such a thing at all; except, indeed, it be a bankruptcy or a broken bone. The latter was near falling to my lot as I was travelling at my ease at the pleasant pace of about three

VOL. IV.                      2 B                      miles



miles an hour, in a commodious carriage composed, I apprehend, of a certain number of planks clumsily put together by some clumsy joiner, and supported by two crazy wheels. This post-waggon, as it was termed, drawn by horses, one of which was blind and the other lame, seemed, at the rate we drove, to require some ingenuity to overset it. That business, however, was accomplished. I was picked up in no condition to thank my benefactors, as the blood flowed plentifully from a wound in my head, which, though it did not dispossess my brains, threw them at least into such a state of disorder as required some hours of repose to set them right. There are indeed certain of my acquaintance who affirm that they never have been right from that time: but these are mere calumniators. My disorder since has lain in my heart; and is, therefore, of a nature which only the infected can judge of.

The

The moment I thoroughly recovered my senses I began to reconnoitre my situation. It was no bad one for a man who had been jumbled in such a conveyance as that I had quitted, could the exchange have been effected with less hazard to my bones. I found myself in a neat bed, furnished with white curtains. It is to be observed that I always had a particular predilection for white curtains; especially in foreign countries, for reasons unnecessary to detail. My chief attendant was a respectable, middle-aged woman, who seemed most kindly officious in assisting my recovery:—but truth must be told; my gratitude was not sufficiently just to direct itself principally to her, for I saw at different times several other females pass and repass my chamber, some of whom were almost children, and the eldest of them not apparently above eighteen. They were all slight, blooming, and generally distinguished by the bright

polished skin and fair locks, approaching the golden, by which the lasses of the northern hemisphere are mostly to be known.

As a Scotsman I ought to have admired this complexion beyond all others; but Scotsmen can sometimes be perverse: nay, though I know that the contrary has been maliciously asserted, they can even fail to be national. Among these pretty girls there was one then who appeared to me no less remarkable for the superiority of her charms than for the different character of her countenance. She had dark eyes, and curls of shining black hair fell almost into them over her forehead; while the longer locks were twisted up in a sort of tress infinitely graceful. Her features, I am told, were not altogether perfect: but for my life I never could get further in the scrutiny than her eyes: yet they were ungrateful eyes too! for they rarely, indeed hardly ever, would

would meet mine. But when they did—  
Oh then—

“ The large black orbs, filled with a sprightly light,

“ Shot forth a lively and illustrious night \* ! ” —

From being over head and ears in the mire  
I was almost as quickly over head and ears  
in love. Yet not wholly with a face either:  
for my fair Swede, who by the bye turned  
out to be no Swede at all, spoke French;  
so luckily did I: and during the days of my  
convalescence the hospitable family, without  
distrust or guile, gave me frequent oppor-  
tunities to snatch conversation with any of  
the young women by turns. I must have  
been a monster had I abused the confidence  
shown me. Not I mean by any decided  
act of libertinism; for I found them suffi-  
ciently well educated and decorous in their  
habits to put that out of the question; but

\* Cowley.



even by fulying the genuine purity of their minds with gross flattery or worldly address. My eyes and my heart, nevertheless, turned towards Clandina with that decided preference which makes itself alike understood either in simple or sophisticated life.

Thus agreeably circumstanced, I took care not to recover the effects of my accident too hastily: nay it is not at all clear to me when that recovery would have been perfected, had not an anxious letter from my father, who was equally alarmed for the health of his son and for some particular commercial concerns, roused me from my dream of idleness and felicity. I well knew, in fact, that I had no business in Sweden at all. I had been sent to St. Petersburg on an affair of consequence to my family, and nothing but the levity and busy curiosity of two-and-twenty had led me

me out of my way, to explore copper-mines and herbalife upon mountains.

The man who turns from his road at all, stands a chance of going much further than he calculates: such was my case in every particular; and how to get into it again, in truth, I hardly knew. My letters had been forwarded to me from Russia: should I say I had remained there, or should I acknowledge my wanderings? I chose to dissemble, and experience showed me I chose wrong. I sent to my correspondent at St. Peterburg such letters as I wished transmitted to England: I enjoined him faithfully to conceal my real abode, and I prepared to stay awhile longer with my host and his charming family. To this arrangement, however, I had, as it appeared, nobody's consent but my own: for the good man, who was a Lutheran priest,—frank, well-instructed, and a more strict observer than I

supposed him to be of the characters and feelings of those around,—no sooner discovered, by my dispatching letters to St. Petersburg, that I did not intend yet to go thither, than the tone of my reception entirely changed. I shut my eyes, nevertheless, to this for several days, at the expiration of which time my host invited me to walk after breakfast with him one morning in his garden. I had an ugly presentiment of what was to be the subject of our conversation, and I would, therefore, very willingly have declined it; but the thing was impossible.

It was a fine sunshiny day. Nothing could be more delightful than the scene. A balmy air just stirred the leaves of the flowers that were distributed around us; and the dew, not being yet exhaled, caused them to send forth that pure and exquisite fragrance which seems the immediate breath

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of Heaven. The cottage of the pastor was situated in a wild and almost savage country, the rough features of which, softening as they approached, presented within its immediate precincts an image of tranquillity every thing seemed to realife. The sea, like a broad blue belt, skirted the distances; and a good eye might even occasionally catch the outline of the larger vessels as they steered through the Gulf of Bothnia.

With all this flowery description, however, which my recollection has since obtruded upon me, nobody could be further from relishing the beauties of nature than I was at that moment; at least such as then presented themselves to my eyes. To hear me, nevertheless, you would have concluded me an enthusiast. It was impossible to speak more fluently, or with more eloquence than I did upon them: I remember I was particularly inspired upon the subject

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of bees, of which my host had a large provision in his hives; and it was true that their soft, but busy murmur, really contributed in no small degree to the species of rustic voluptuousness his garden otherwise afforded. I was even entering into an exact inquiry concerning their domestic economy and regulations, when my companion interrupted me.

“My good young Englishman,” said he, —which, by the bye, was a misnomer, for I was a North Briton,—“I perceive you are very ingenious in evading the question on which I wished to speak with you. But, with your leave, I must be permitted to obtrude it. It is evident that you are not disposed to quit us; and I may tell you, without flattery, that I shall be no less sorry on my side to part with you. There is something of simplicity and nature in your character that pleases me. Unhappily, indeed, it is too natural;

tural; for you have stumbled upon an old-fashioned error which the combinations of society have almost exploded.—You are fallen in love, as it is termed: that is, you have seen a pretty girl for whom you have a tender preference, and who indeed justifies it, as I believe her mind to be no less innocent and charming than her person. But have you considered what you are about? You are apparently a very young man,—dependent, if I understand you rightly, on your father: your country is at war with that of Claudina; and, were it even otherwise, it is extremely improbable that your parents should sanction your attachment to a young French emigrée who has neither family nor establishment on which she can rely. I know the English are a generous nation: but I also know human nature to be, under various modifications, the same every where; and I cannot, therefore, be of opinion that your choice will obtain the sanction of your friends.”

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The discourse of the good man opened a new light upon me. I spoke French fluently it must be owned; so too did all his family; but I had a true British accent, and my ear had not been nice enough, or my eyes had monopolised the power of my other senses, to discover that Claudina was a native French woman. To my worthy friend's harangue I could only observe in answer, "That young men seldom did consider what they were about when they fell in love, or they would possibly never do so at all. That I had, besides, been taken at an unfair advantage, since my senses were not my own at the time; and that I verily believed they never would be so again, unless I were happy enough to possess Claudina. That he was perfectly right with regard to my dependance on my father; but that I was blest with the most affectionate parents in the world, who would not, I was persuaded, be tempted by any

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consideration to destroy the happiness of their son; and that, with respect to my future steps, it had been my intention maturely to consider before I ventured upon them."

I did not pronounce the latter part of my discourse so emphatically, or with half so good a grace as the first: for my conscience told me that, to say the very best of it, it was but half true. Not, certainly, that I suspected my parents of being willing to destroy my happiness; but till fathers and sons agree more exactly in what happiness consists, I am afraid the expression will always be a little equivocal between them. My sincerity was even more questionable in the concluding sentence; since, far from having resolved maturely to weigh my future steps, I had never looked into the future at all. My love was yet in its infancy; or rather in that progressive state of the passion when

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the présent is all-sufficient to happiness; when the new and delightful sentiment is just awakened in the bosom, and has not yet given one single jog to that long train of doubts, jealousies, desires, and disquietudes, which render it ever afterwards so troublesome. My host, however, had done this business completely for me. From the very hour he and I talked together, I found that love was no such sport of the fancy as I had hitherto imagined, and I began, indeed, to look to the future with an anxious eye.

I presently discovered that the birth of Claudina was noble : this I was sorry for, because mine was not. Her story was simple, and, in fact, the history of thousands. She had lost her father, who had fallen a sacrifice to his political opinions, at a very early period of the French revolution. Her mother, in escaping from  
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France, had been shipwrecked in her voyage to St. Petersburg, and, from the consequences of fatigue and suffering, had soon after left Claudina an unprotected and impoverished orphan. For this I was no less sorry than for the circumstances of her birth: for I suspected that it would be my lot to be too opulent; and I began, like my good host, to doubt the concurrence of my family in the step I was meditating. My calculations on this head have proved erroneous however. It has not yet been my lot to be very rich, and it probably never will; but my mind is made to my fortune, and I do not envy those who boast a more splendid one.

My first effort at thinking was not at all successful. I saw no point on which I could reasonably build; and I therefore grew fretful,—consequently fancied myself indisposed. I was indeed really ill for two

or three days. My host perceived it, and insensibly relaxed the rigidity of his muscles. What was much better, Claudina perceived it too; and I had the exquisite happiness of believing that I was not indifferent to her. Sweet, though transitory moment that enliven existence, how precious is your recollection to a tender mind!

The first use I made of my returning health, was to impart to Claudina the sentiments with which she inspired me; and I received from that grateful and generous girl such a hearing as made an indelible impression upon my heart. Claudina, however, was so entirely the child of nature, and so wholly unskilled in the ways of the world, that to have consulted her upon those difficulties and probable inconveniences which her reverend guardian had conjured up to my imagination, would only have doubled them. She was, besides, not much  
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more than seventeen, and had seen little beyond her mother's house and the walls of a convent. I was, therefore, thrown entirely upon my own fund of sagacity and prudence : and, to say truth, when I consider with how small a principal I set out, I must confess myself, in the commercial phrase, to have made no bad speculation.

I learnt from Claudina that she had a brother who served in the army of the French princes, and whom her mother hoped to have joined at St. Petersburg. She had herself reason to suppose she might learn tidings of him at the court of the empress, although the obscure condition of the family with which she resided, and their distance from St. Petersburg had rendered the vague inquiries they had hitherto been able to make totally fruitless. The opportunity it must be owned was most tempting to a lover—a poor fellow who saw him-



self constrained to depart with a heart half broken, and a head not quite healed. I weighed secretly with Claudina the possibility of prevailing on her reverend protector to suffer her to depart with me in search of her brother: it was plain that we were novices in the ways of the world, or such a plan could not possibly have entered the head of either; but among the few peculiarities that marked the dear girl's character, and she had none that were not graceful and becoming, was an anxious desire to be restored to her family, and an opinion that she had no right to dispose of herself without the consent of this brother; who, being by many years the elder, she had been taught by her mother to look up to as the arbiter of her fate. She had, besides, long felt that her continued residence in Sweden was a burthen on her benefactor, whose scanty income ill allowed him to exercise the generous feelings of his

his heart: and Claudina, brought up in affluence, had not yet been able to image such a genuine picture of poverty as should incapacitate her brother from receiving or maintaining her. Alas, she little knew the condition of many of her countrymen! I was not myself much better informed on the subject: and, to say truth, had I even been so, I fear I should have preferred the delightful idea of having Claudina my companion at St. Petersburg to all the sober objections that reason could possibly have presented to me.

We were not gone so far, however, in love or Arcadian simplicity as to conceive the idea of her accompanying me alone. Chance presented her a suitable protection in the society of a Swedish merchant and his family, to whom she was known, and who were to embark in the same vessel with myself. After much hesitation then

I ventured to communicate our mutual wishes to my kind host. He looked extremely grave on the project, although I had dressed it up in colours as soberly simple as fancy and love would permit me. I found an auxiliary, however, where I did not expect one—in the person of his wife ; who, being a good economist, and a woman of no great expansion of mind in other particulars, was not, I believe, sorry to seize the opportunity of freeing herself from a person whom she conceived to be an incumbrance in her domestic arrangements.

To be short; the lovely Claudina was committed to my protection,—but under the superintending eyes of a female Argus, who promised to watch carefully over her. On my part I faithfully swore either to place her in the care of her brother, or to make her my wife, at every hazard of circumstances,

cumstances, should she consent to become such without waiting his concurrence. In the interim I engaged to lodge her in the house of my own correspondent at Petersburg, a respectable merchant, the regularity of whose family left nothing in the arrangement liable to objection, and where I was not to become an inmate myself. I was so truly in earnest in all my declarations and plans, that I believe I left no doubt of my sincerity in the mind of my hearer. Yet the good man was not quite sure he was doing right in consenting to our scheme, and I saw tears in his eyes as he embraced us previous to our departure. Claudina also wept: nor could I forbear shedding tears of sympathy myself: though, such was to me the joyful sorrow of the moment, that I will not swear they did not spring from at least a blended emotion.



The clear beauties of a northern hemisphere in summer are only to be known by those who have witnessed them. The sun, hardly setting, left throughout the whole night a gentle twilight, which, illumined by the aurora borealis, presented new and innumerable charms both in the heavens and the ocean. The merchant's family, Claudina, and myself, often sat upon the deck during the greater part of these nights; and her sweet voice, in unison with the voices of some other female passengers, would frequently chaunt a sort of national and simple music, so perfectly harmonising with the scene before us, as to fill the senses of every hearer with nearly equal delight. Never did the charming features of Claudina appear to more advantage than when seen by this soft and shadowy light. For my part I almost wished my whole life was to be a voyage; and was truly sorry when we cast anchor in  
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the harbour of Cronstادت. Here all was in contrast to the tranquillity we had been witnessing, and the bustle of trade and shipping would have driven away almost any sentiment less vigorous than love before the potent genius of gain.

Our plans at St. Petersburg were, I quickly discovered, in no immediate way to be realised. The traces Claudina had of her brother were so very imperfect, and so many changes had taken place in the distribution of the French regiments there, that it was extremely difficult to pursue our inquiries concerning him. I continued to make some, however; and, in the interim, I had now the double satisfaction of keeping in view the business my father had intrusted to me, and of enjoying daily the society of the woman I adored. Claudina, on her side, was anxiously employed in acquiring the English language

and accent; and such was the delicacy of her organs, or her ear, perhaps aided by the inspiring influence of her tutor, that I have never since heard it spoken by any foreigner with equal purity. Although I had fulfilled with the strictest fidelity every engagement into which I had entered concerning her, she was yet by no means satisfied with her situation. Not that it was any way objectionable on the score of propriety; for she had every protection and accommodation that could be demanded. She was besides embosomed in an affluent family, and had dress, pleasures, in short all the advantages that affluence itself could bestow: but it was to me that she owed them, and the delicacy of her mind taught her daily to revolt more and more from the nature of the obligation. Vainly did I represent to her that she had received the same, at least in the proportion of worldly circumstances, from her former protectors; that

that she was, in fact, my affianced wife, and that all I could offer her would be only what she had a claim to. Young as she was, she felt the difference of the relative situations; and such was the soft and retiring propriety this consideration gave to her manners, that though I complained I could not but love her the better for it.

But although Claudina was, on the whole, self-denying and discreet in the extreme, she was too gentle, young, and lovely, to be always proof against solicitation. I delighted in showing her beauty, and I, therefore, took every opportunity of leading her into such scenes of elegance as might display it to advantage. The approach of winter in the northern courts is the signal for a species of festivity unknown in milder climates: and the amusement of driving *en traineau*, is practised with a luxury and splendor that to a stranger is singu-



singularly dazzling. I was myself an expert performer that way, and, therefore, extremely ambitious of exhibiting at once my own talents and the charms of Claudina. She was, for a long time, averse to this proposal: I nevertheless extorted her consent, and I provided an elegant traineau, in which I placed my fair charge. Nothing can exceed the brilliance and gaiety of this kind of diversion. Numberless carriages, fancifully ornamented, all in motion at once, and flying with the velocity of fairy cars, carrying their beautiful enchantresses along with them, form a *coup d'œil* altogether delightful. Claudina was in high spirits; nor was I less elevated, though I cannot impute even to the giddiness of my pleasure any blame as to the accident that followed,

We had already made our course, and were on the point of returning home, when

when a more numerous succession of carriages than before caused some slight apprehension from probable entanglements or embarrassment. Among the traineaux that lately entered was one guided by an officer: the lady who sat in it seemed, by the splendor of her appearance, and the rich furs in which she was wrapt, to be of very considerable rank; and her conductor, with more zeal than skill, threatened destruction to every carriage that came within his vortex. Unfortunately mine happened to be of the number. I remembered my last accident, and I was not willing to try the thickness of my head a second time. I was besides anxious for Claudina's safety, and I therefore exerted my jockey-ship in making over the danger to my antagonist. I was but too successful. We had a rude shock that threw us both into confusion. On his part the danger was imminent, and it was the chance of a moment

moment that both he and the lady with him did not suffer material injury. His resentment burst out into an intemperance of language I was not at all disposed to endure. Our contention, therefore, soon amounted to little short of defiance on both sides. A general disorder ensued; and, such was the overbearing insolence of my adversary, that it would have been difficult to have foreseen the event between us, had not a party of guards interposed, and put an end to the tumult. We were separated; and I was, by authority, enjoined to return home.

Claudina, who had during this scene been ready to faint with fear, now drew great consolation from a circumstance which certainly afforded me none—that of my being put under arrest within the house for several days. Her apprehensions for my personal safety left her no sympathy for  
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the indignity to which I thought myself subjected. I was not so calm, though I found it necessary to seem so; and the first care of both, though for different reasons, was to inform ourselves of the name and rank of my antagonist. He was called, it appeared, the Count St. Victoire. Nothing more was necessary to assure Claudina that it was her brother.—St. Victoire had quitted his country before the death of his father: he was, indeed, among the first of that ill-informed or ill-judging part of the nobility who sought safety or revenge in a foreign one. His sister was at that time a child, and immured within the walls of a convent. The duties of the service into which he had entered, as most of the young nobility of France were accustomed to do at a very early age, had not permitted him to be much at Paris; and she had, therefore, seen him so rarely, that it was not at all surprising she did not recognise



recognise him, clothed as he was in furs too for the occasion, and under the circumstances of terror and agitation on her part in which they at length met.

The alarm I experienced on this discovery was little short of that felt by Claudina herself. Of all men living her brother was, perhaps, the one I would most have wished to serve: he was certainly the last I would willingly have offended. Yet I felt that, after what had passed, it would be difficult, to say the least, for either to conciliate the good will of the other. There was something in the manners of St. Victoire that announced him at first sight to be what he really proved; and I conceived from that moment an evil presentiment concerning him. I left Claudina to take her own measures in making herself known to her brother, and I waited impatiently to see what would be the event of our  
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quarrel, as soon as it should be ascertained that my temporary restraint was at an end. This happened sooner than I expected. On the second day my arrest was taken off; but an express order from court forbade either of us to testify further resentment against each other; and enjoined, what it was not in the power of any court to enforce, a total forgetfulness of the past. On my side I was obliged to enter into a sort of recognizance that should secure my obedience; which I was contented to do, as I found St. Victoire lay under a restriction from his commanding officer little inferior to mine. I had afterwards reason to know that the argument made use of to induce his easier compliance with what was required of him was the disproportion of rank between himself and his antagonist. I was far from suspecting this at the time; otherwise I am not sure my

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Caledonian blood would patiently have tolerated it.

While peace was thus apparently restored between us, Claudina had not been wanting in any effort on her part that might render it either permanent or sincere. St. Victoire was at first greatly surprised at discovering his sister, and much struck with her beauty, as well as with the native charms of her character. The dear girl I doubt not spared no eloquence to make him a convert to mine: but she was not so successful as, I will venture proudly to say, she deserved to be. St. Victoire could not indeed deny that I appeared to have acted both generously and delicately towards his sister; but he took care to invalidate the merit of my conduct by representing the probability of its proving, in the end, to be either uncertain, or insidious. I burnt  
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with resentment; but I had no resource. I could not again embroil myself with the brother of Claudina; and had I done so, I should not have remedied my misfortune: for although she lamented his injustice as much as I did, she could not be prevailed upon absolutely to revolt from his authority. She was besides much under age, and had no power, either according to the regulations of her own country, or of those in which she resided, to set him at defiance. —And now I believe we both bitterly regretted Sweden, our good old friend there, and the tranquil happiness we had enjoyed under his roof. St. Victoire, however, after some days of deliberation, constrained himself to render me personal thanks for the protection I had afforded his sister. He did it so proudly as to convince me that he meant to discharge both himself and her from the obligation: but I had not much leisure to ruminate upon his intentions, for



he presently announced to me "that Claudina was now become his care: that it was his purpose immediately to remove her from the *very respectable* hands in which I had placed her, to a situation more suitable to her country and her condition in life: that he should be very happy to acknowledge my civilities in every mode that lay in his power; and he hinted at any pecuniary demands which I might be entitled to make." This put me out of all patience. I knew him to be poor; and I believed myself to be rich enough to have bought half his regiment: but it was not the question of poverty or riches that lay between us: honour, sensibility, and every thing dear to a noble mind, was included in it.

I told him plainly, and at once, the mutual engagements that subsisted between myself and Claudina. I professed before Heaven there was no affluence I could have offered  
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that deserving and lovely girl which I should have thought equal to her merits; but I could not conquer myself so far as to forbear adverting with disdain to the pecuniary indemnification hinted at in his speech, whether I considered the offer only, or the resources of him who offered it.— I concluded with a protestation that nothing should tear Claudina from me; and I referred him to herself, to know whether she would be prevailed upon to give me up.

I had now made things a thousand times worse than they were before. St. Victoire commanded his pride, indeed, so far as to answer me in terms of decent civility; but I could easily perceive that I had exasperated and nettled him to the very soul. He made extremely light of my reference to his sister; affecting to consider her as a child who was incompetent to judge of her own wishes. He gave me very clearly

to understand that he had influence enough at court to defeat any I might flatter myself with possessing; and very civilly insinuated that the son of a merchant could never, under any circumstances either of wealth or poverty, be a match for the sister of the Count St. Victoire.—Nothing more could be made of our conference, unless it had come to a serious and hostile appeal; which, for various reasons, each was unwilling it should do. We parted mutually out of humour, and mutually resolved to carry the future our own way.

Claudina was overwhelmed with grief when she learnt the event of our conversation. Both she and I had been so deficient in knowledge of the world, and so little used to calculate the various points of view in which circumstances appear to various characters, that it had never at any moment occurred to either of us to doubt our reception

ception from her brother, or his approbation of the measures we had pursued. How great then was our disappointment to find the event we had so much desired now threatening to prove an insuperable obstacle to our union. I had even cause for additional chagrin, on reflecting that my own indiscreet wish of exhibiting my fair charge had exposed us mutually to this unforeseen mortification. I had, nevertheless, entertained hitherto so clear a conviction that the sentiments I cherished for Claudina were such, as while they contributed to her happiness, would also place her out of the reach of those worldly sorrows and carking cares which corrode the sweetest buds of youth, that I experienced something like astonishment at the new light St. Victoire's opinions had thrown upon the whole business. They were not altogether so irrational, however, as my situation naturally inclined me to believe them. I



even felt that they were not so; though I was unwilling to acknowledge it even to my own heart. In spite of that air of levity and nonchalance with which he affected to speak of his sister, it was evident to me that he was much struck with her beauty, and built secretly upon it, as a certain means of procuring her a brilliant establishment. To say truth, I was not without an internal conviction of the same nature; and it was this which was my scourge. Perhaps we were both blinded by our partiality towards her;—so however it was.

Claudina entertained no such views or feelings. She conceived herself bound to me by every tie of gratitude or love, and she vindicated both my behaviour and intentions with the dignity of a mind that feels itself above misconstruction. She did not indeed think herself entitled either by years or experience to determine her own conduct;

duct; but though she submitted that to the temporary authority of St. Victoire, she did not fail to tell him that nothing short of the conviction of demerit on my part would ever induce her to violate the engagement between us: and she peremptorily refused to shock or exasperate me by returning any of the gifts I had lavished on her. "Nothing fortune could bestow" she tenderly declared, "would be in her eyes so dear or so honourable as those lasting memorials of poverty on her side, and of the most unalloyed generosity on mine."—These were refinements quite out of the way of St. Victoire. He had concluded it to be a matter of justice that, in taking away his sister, he should guard against my suffering any other loss. Alas! he had no conception of those feelings which, in certain cases, render acquittal an insult, and degrade us in our own eyes, by forcing us to discover that our best actions have been deemed venal and selfish!—"Oh!

consent to be obliged to me !' have I been ready on other occasions to exclaim, when I have seen the proud and too susceptible heart shrink distrustfully from the tender offices of a kindness it feared it could not return. ' Prove that you esteem me enough to believe that I am rewarded in the action of serving you !'

St. Victoire, in fine, like a true man of the world, concluded that his sister loved the baubles I had presented her with. He, therefore, gave up the contest ; satisfied to gain his chief point her way, since he could not gain it his own ; and he removed her that very night from the house in which she had hitherto resided, to that of the Marchioness de S——, a young Frenchwoman of considerable rank, whose husband had emigrated some time after St. Victoire, and was in the same regiment with the latter. The finances of the Marquis de S—— were  
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said to be in better order than those of his friend: but he lived expensively, made a great figure, and indulged his wife in the same habits of dissipation and high play they had both formerly pursued at Paris. St. Victoire was by no means behind-hand in extravagance. Through that mist of disappointment and chagrin which clouded my present prospects, I was not, therefore, without a ray of hope that the whole establishment of these high-toned noblesse was upon so uncertain a base as might bring Claudina once more within my reach, without any violent struggle on my part. How sweet was to me the idea that *she* would neither feel humbled nor degraded by such a circumstance, but would do me the justice to understand me. I had an interview with the dear girl on the evening before she left the house of our mutual friend. Her tears, her endearments, her protestations of unshaken constancy, calmed the  
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burning indignation of my heart. I could deny nothing to her sollicitation, and I, therefore, promised to attend the future with a degree of moderation I was not at first disposed to show.

The house in which Claudina now resided was one where I, of course, had no access: and, in spite of my promises, a few days rendered this constraint insupportable to me. I weighed maturely every possible motive of interest, kindness, or even hostility, by which I might hope to act upon St. Victoire; but in vain. He was a man so entirely out of my sphere both as to character and connections, so wrong-headed and cold-hearted, that I found no medium through which I could reach him. I was a thousand times tempted to have recourse to the most desperate; but to what purpose?—We were both, in the first place, under the immediate  
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cognisance of authority: an attempt to defy it might occasion the most serious ill consequences, not only to ourselves, but to our countrymen. St. Victoire was, besides, unquestionably brave; and we could, therefore, at best meet only on a footing of equality. How, if fortune gave me the advantage, should I be benefited by it? In truth, the only benefit it appeared to me I could possibly derive from such a rencontre, was that of dying.—I had a little of the Anglo-mania in me; and there were moments of impotent rage and grief when I was inclined to think that no despicable resource.

A man, however, must take more than one bitter dose of disappointment, I believe, before he really comes to such an extremity: at least that was my case. I now endeavoured, under the auspices of my correspondent at St. Petersburg, to apply myself  
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more assiduously to business, in order to lighten my cares.—I had soon reason to suspect that it would, in fact, only increase them. I was seized with alarm at some critical circumstances that occurred, and censured myself for a remissness which yet, I believe, had had no material influence over my father's concerns; though in the moment of surprise I was disposed to think otherwise. My friend now also communicated to me some particulars relative to our affairs in England, which my correspondents there had, through kindness, forbore minutely to relate; and I perceived that while I had been solely occupied in lamenting griefs, some real, some chimerical, but all of them wholly selfish, an evil of the most serious nature impended over my family, and threatened to bring my own mortifications to their climax. I now exerted myself to retrieve lost time, and to recover certain debts, the amount of which had not hither-

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to appeared so material in my eyes as I found it ought to have done. My zeal, however, was too late : it could not have saved us, had it been earlier awakened ; but it would have acquitted me to my own heart, which ever painfully throbs at the recollection ; and I should have been better prepared to encounter what followed :—the first ships that arrived from England told me that my father had been declared a bankrupt.

I cannot even yet think of the circumstance, without a renewal of those afflicting sensations by which I was at the moment stunned and overwhelmed. Here then was an end of my towering hopes, my high-spirited affluence and independence. Here was such a termination of every claim with respect to Claudina, as it would not be in her power even to counteract. For though she had been willing to bestow  
herself



herself upon me, could I accept her? It seemed on the contrary, that honour and justice commanded me to free her from her engagements, and thus give her those chances in life, on the event of which her brother had been so sanguine. From him my heart now revolted more entirely than before. I could not endure the triumph I believed he would have over me, or the opportunity he would take to exult to his sister in the superiority of his own judgment and prudence. I made no doubt but he would be little-minded enough to conclude that I had foreseen the misfortune that was likely to fall upon my family, and that I was aware I should make no sacrifice whatever in securing the possession of Claudina. Nay, it was not even clear to me, that, in the excess of his vanity and self-love, by would not suppose I had built something upon the advantages of such a connection. These, and similar reflections, together with  
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various additional chagrins resulting from my situation, made me now in reality almost weary of existence. But I owed the care of mine to those dear relatives who were suffering with me, and who had not, like myself, youth and health to combat with difficulties.

It became highly necessary that I should return to England : but although I meditated so doing without taking leave of Claudina, my resolution, nevertheless, failed me as the time drew near. I will own, however, that, among my objections to seeing her, the situation in which I now stood was one. My mind, unlike hers, was not sufficiently self-poised to avoid finding a humiliation in poverty ; or possibly the recollection of her brother was blended too intimately with that even of herself,—and, oh ! how different were they in their natures !—to admit of my being governed by

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a genuine and unmixed feeling.—The cruel hour of separation at length arrived. Claudina and I parted as most lovers part, with many tears, many protestations, and some careffes. She was never very lavish of those: yet I know not how it was, but she had the art of convincing me that no want of love occasioned her reserve. She had little reason I found to be satisfied with the situation in which her brother had placed her. It obliged her daily to see a number of giddy young officers, none of them in circumstances to realise the sanguine expectations of St. Victoire, though sufficiently susceptible or gallant to be troublesome to his sister. Nevertheless, so great a blemish does the want of fortune cast on beauty, that I did not learn Claudina had any decided admirer of rank or affluence enough to expose her to persecution. In fact I gathered nothing of all this from herself: for of herself, except

cept when the question of duties or affections arose, she seldom or never spoke. But my good friend the merchant's wife, with whom she had resided, reserved for me constantly all the information it was possible to collect ; and when that proved insufficient to fill up our conversations on the subject, we had a supplementary fund of conjecture that was never exhausted.

I did not fail to relate faithfully to Claudina, before we parted, the misfortunes in which I found myself involved, and those future ones I apprehended. Claudina, however, I quickly perceived, had not yet attained any distinct idea of poverty. She, indeed, conceived very clearly what it was to lose the luxuries of a spacious apartment, and a numerous train of domestics ; to have nothing but a hired carriage at command, and to be restricted by prudence in the purchase of a trinket. All this she had felt ;



therefore she understood it :—at her age we rarely look deeper. But such was the character of her mind both for genuine simplicity and rational pleasures, that she was not able to make herself any griefs out of these and similar losses. Her humblest ideas of indigence extended to a plain, and sometimes scanty meal, like that of our good pastor ; a cottage too like his, more calculated for utility than ornament ; and certain humble domestic occupations which the narrowness of his circumstances necessarily imposed on his wife and daughters.—How many people picture poverty in the way Claudina did !—Ah ! should such be carried into the miserable hovels where real indigence resides !—should they there see their fellow-creature, possibly their equal, stretched out in sickness and hopeless misery !—should they see, not privation, but famine ;—not disappointment, but despair ;—babyhood without playfulness, manhood with-

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out vigour, and age without nourishment; how would their erring, but tender and humane hearts, suffer under the spectacle!—Let us not deceive ourselves!—Extreme and abject poverty is, vice excepted, the most deplorable condition of human nature!—It carries not, as the more acute sufferings of body or of mind do, a balm or a termination in itself.—No!—it is like water poured drop by drop upon the brain of a criminal, till the whole man groans under excruciating torture!—Should I expose the dear girl I loved, even remotely, to the experience of so cruel an evil?—My whole soul revolted from the idea.

“Listen to me, my dear Claudina!” said I, as we were parting. “When I offered you my hand and my heart I believed that I could add to them the blessings of independence at least: it has proved otherwise, and your brother was more correct in

his calculation of the chances of life than we supposed him to be. I will never rob the sister of the Count St. Victoire, or rather I will never rob my own Claudina, of such real advantages in it as she has a right from her merit or charms to expect; though I would, without scruple, have permitted her to sacrifice to our mutual attachment those ideal goods, those factitious substitutes, for all that is really valuable and honourable in human nature, to which common minds bow down with so implicit a reverence.—While you love me however, dearest Claudina! you are, and can be only mine: but should you cease to do so, the bond between us is from that moment broken: nor shall an injurious thought, much less a reproach, pursue you on my part.”—These were high-sounding words; but I have on reflection believed them not so sincere as they then appeared to be. There was certainly a little of the chicanery of love  
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in them.—I softened her soul by the idea of my approaching departure; I won over every tender and grateful feeling of her mind by the recollection of the past: finally, I subdued her sensibility by the extravagance of my own; and when her enthusiasm was at its highest, I then said to her, “Claudina, if you can prefer any other man, renounce me.” All this was perhaps at last only an ingenious artifice of self-love!—but when a man does not know he is artificial, I think he may be pardoned. Nevertheless, if it was really my intention to extort fresh protestations of constancy from Claudina, I was disappointed; for she made none: she wept bitterly, however; and her expressive eyes, while she listened to me, rendered language unnecessary. I embraced her once more, and immediately after embarked for England.

This voyage was not like the last. I no longer found any charms either in the



heavens or the ocean; and my thoughts wandered incessantly over the past and the future with the most painful anxiety. We had not been long at sea before a heavy gale arose that rendered our navigation even less pleasant than before. When I heard the sailors talk of the danger of the breakers, and saw, though at a distance, the horrible prospect they presented, I thought of Claudina and her unfortunate mother, flying, like many others of their countrywomen, from their native land, from all that was dear or familiar, to contend with elements no less inhospitable to them than the human race. After beating about some days, we ran at length for security into a small Swedish port. I was tempted to land, in order to set my foot in the country where I had first seen Claudina, and to make a sort of love-pilgrimage towards the very spot. However I resisted this impulse of romance; and it was

was lucky I did so: I should otherwise have lost my passage: for the wind became fair a few hours after, and it was not long before I landed in England.

I found my father's situation there even more perplexing than I had expected it to be. His concerns had been so multiplied and so various, that it required the most persevering assiduity to disentangle them, or reduce the chaos to order. This was in a great measure my employment: my days were necessarily devoted to it: and, after immense application, I returned home spiritless and exhausted of an evening, to rise the ensuing morning to the same painful occupations. People to whom life is a plaything know nothing of such cares as fill up the hours of one half of the community, and too often unfit them, not merely for its frivolous, but even its social intercourse: yet these apparent favourites of

fortune, like spoiled children, often become weary of their toy, while those in whose hands it is an engine of either private or public utility, have always within themselves a source of honourable satisfaction : —and such, in the midst of my vexations, was mine !

My father was a man of strict probity and deep intellect ; but his manners were not ingratiating, and his understanding was of that biting and repulsive kind which makes few friends. He had a decided love of scheming ; and his plans had, for the most part, been both sagacious and successful : a concurrence of circumstances had now rendered them far otherwise. The consequence was that he became bitterly censured, and even indirectly calumniated. He was too proud to endure this, and too helpless to remedy it. His constitution sunk under the conflict ; and I found him,

on my arrival in England, far gone in a malady that had every appearance of proving mortal. It is in the hour of sorrow, sickness, or poverty, that we learn how to estimate our natural affinities. Placed on the pinnacle of health and prosperity, man stands a sort of independent and self-possessed being, whom the ties and affections only touch at certain points: reduce him from this station in society, and he will at once become sensible of his own insufficiency. It is then he will, perhaps, best learn the value of those friends with whom nature has providently furnished him, and whose habits, tastes, affections, nay even weaknesses, most in sympathy with his own, calculate them to take place of all others. Never were my parents and myself so much attached as at this juncture: yet it was a sorrowful one; and I still cannot remember without a pang the hour when I lost my father. In addition to  
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this heavy calamity, my mother had the grief of seeing her only brother alienated from us some months before, by the circumstances in which our late bankruptcy had involved him. He was a man of considerable property, and therefore stood the shock: but he did not easily forgive the person who exposed him to the hazard, and all intercourse between him and my father had been consequently broken off. On the death of the latter he came to visit my mother; but he expressed no desire to see me, and I was too proud to obtrude myself upon him.

I had now neither hope nor dependance in life. The narrow income my mother's settlement enabled her to rescue from the wreck of our affairs was barely equal to her support. I had myself received too many indignities, or at least what I conceived to be such, from the few who called themselves

my

my father's friends, during the progress of our misfortune, to place the smallest reliance upon them; and I was torn to pieces between nature and love. Claudina was ever first and last in my thoughts, amid all my cares and torments: but I saw no chance of calling her mine. I could even hear from her but seldom; and although her own letters, when they reached me, breathed the most unchanged affection, my friend the merchant's wife failed not to supply her husband with little reports, which if they did not absolutely excite my distrust, yet created something in my bosom so nearly allied to jealousy, as severely to increase my incidental chagrins. His manner of relating them was, besides, so cold and laconic, that I hardly knew what to conclude or gather from his hints: to say truth, I have since had reason to believe that the chief object of both these well-meaning, though misjudging people, was  
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in unison with what they believed would be the wish of my friends,—to break an engagement that threatened only ruin to either of the parties concerned. I, like Claudina, was not without some natural or acquired advantages; and the worthy man at St. Petersburg, therefore, concluded that, if detached from her, I should most probably settle with some commercial family in England, marry, as he had done, one of the daughters, and step in for as large a portion of the goods of this world along with her as I honestly could contrive to do.

This might, perhaps, have happened: and, indeed, my affairs went on in a train that seemed not to make it unlikely: but I had no taste for the project. I revolved many, although that was not among the number, without being able to fix on one. I had secretly a strong desire to plunge into some adventurous scheme abroad; but I was  
fettered

fettered by two opposing sentiments, which were fated by turns to engross my life and my heart. My mother's health was daily declining: she had neither support nor consolation in the world but me, and the period of her existing there seemed likely to be so short, that I could not resolve to abbreviate it. I, like Gray, had found out that "a man can never have more than one mother:" and mine had, from very childhood, retained a strong interest in my affections. I never in my life saw a creature so perfectly feminine, without being insipid or weak: yet she had neither a very lovely person, nor a highly cultivated understanding; but she was so gentle, so indulgent, so truly conjugal and maternal, so admirably calculated to soothe the bitter moments of life, and to enjoy without intoxication its modest and genuine pleasures, that my heart, even in manhood, was almost



as much hers as though she had been amongst the most dazzling of her sex.

While I was in this anxious state of indigence and indecision, a proposal was made me from a house with which my father had had some commercial connections, that promised to be in the end sufficiently advantageous to merit consideration at least. My mother was urgent with me to accept the overture. She did not at the moment confide to me all her reasons, because she feared they might prove visionary; but I could easily see she had the matter deeply at heart. The situation was not such as I should myself have desired; but I knew that I had the reputation of indulging a proud and almost a rebellious spirit, as far as the world was concerned, the energy of which had been increased by my education and habits. I took therefore a sort of malicious pleasure

pleasure in disappointing the plodding calculators of my father's acquaintance who had affirmed I had no useful abilities; and I half resolved to prove to them that what I could resolve to undertake I could execute, with talents far beyond their methodical dulness. This was again the project of a young man: but I never could feel a half-interest in any thing. My pride, as well as my future advantage, was deeply staked upon that before me; and I consequently turned my attention towards it, with a zeal that not only astonished others, but, to say truth, surprised even myself.

Behold me, then, doomed for my offences, whatever those were,—and my own conscience did not reproach me with many,—to spend the greater part of the day on a high stool, and go through all the drudgery of a compting-house—busy with invoices, &c. &c.—and at intervals execrating  
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French aristocracy, Russian traineaux, and English speculation. I saw my mother only of an evening: but I saw her countenance lighted up at those meetings with an unusual degree of complacency and softness: even her health seemed to amend: and if I was at some moments disposed to break my chain, I never visited her without finding fresh motives for enduring it. Our meals were necessarily frugal, and our indulgencies few; yet my income, though narrow, was a considerable addition to hers: I, therefore, daily perceived the impossibility of alienating it. On feeling the lightness of my own purse, my conduct towards St. Victoire; nevertheless, sometimes came home to me. I remembered the half-disdainful hints I had thrown out on his poverty; and although they were certainly extorted by no small degree of insolence on his side, I became sensible that I had degraded my own character by returning it. It was now my  
part

part to be indigent." I did not feel myself at all the less proud on that account ; and I, therefore, learnt to make allowances for him. Yet I saw, with half despair, that I was further removed than I had been at that period from all chance of conciliating his regard ; since it was not even a concession like that I made to my own heart that would have done it : and it was very clear, that the man who had despised a rich merchant would, at all times, utterly shut his door against a poor one. Claudina, and myself, were, however, both growing older in the interim ; and I concluded, that if we could but contrive to grow richer too, we might at length reasonably set his authority at defiance.

In spite of the mystery my mother had thought it prudent to observe, it was not long before I penetrated into the motives of her conduct. When chance sent me home



to her lodgings at an unexpected hour, I more than once encountered my uncle coming from them. Our meeting appeared at first to disconcert him : by degrees he seemed to accustom himself to it, and at length bestowed on me a half-gracious salutation. I returned the civility, but made no overtures towards improving it. I learnt, however, from third persons, that his visits were pretty frequent : and had I not done so, I should have known by a certain number of additional comforts and conveniences I observed my mother to possess lately, and which I knew our limited means would not have allowed her to indulge in, that some more certain resources than our own were concerned in them. This was every way balm to my heart ; not from its flattering any views that immediately respected myself ; but as I knew that the returning kindness of her brother was, of all possible events, the most grateful

grateful to hers, and could not fail to be in worldly circumstances infinitely advantageous. In law I was eventually my uncle's heir; but he had cut off both my mother and myself, by a will made several months before the death of my father; and as his fortune was his own to bestow, we could, under these circumstances, claim nothing but the little stipend which his fraternal regard had induced him to allot his sister. A reconciliation might still, indeed, incline him to change the disposition of his worldly concerns; but I now knew too much of life to have any great reliance upon this hope, and too much of the dilatory nature of most men not to doubt whether mere indolence might not defeat his purpose, should it even be favourable towards me. I made no doubt, however, but my mother formed a thousand chimerical projects, the first step towards the accomplishing of which would be to associate me in my

uncle's commercial undertakings: and as she was most sanguine in her opinion of my personal influence and abilities, to whatever point they were directed, I was sure she secretly persuaded herself that I should in time prove the sole manager, and, finally, the heir of his wealth.

My plan was far different; but I seemed to shut my eyes to what was passing, and permitted her to follow her own in the manner she deemed most judicious. In fact, I earnestly wished her to acquire such a share, both in the heart and domestic concerns of her brother, as would make her accede with less reluctance to any bolder project I might adopt towards my own establishment in life: for in spite of the external show I continued to make of content and application, my very soul was secretly weary of the uniform and mechanical sort of existence I now endured: or perhaps

haps it was the restless spirit of love that thus undermined my quiet, and rendered me at heart thoroughly averse from a sort of occupation, which, had I possessed a disengaged mind, my early acquirements and habits ought to have fitted me for. What led me to suspect this, was, that my plans, begin at what point of the compass they would, always, in the end, pointed towards St. Petersburg; and, though, reasonably speaking, it was of all places on the globe the last where I could have submitted to appear in any subordinate situation, something relative to it was ever uppermost in my fancy. Even while meditating a voyage to India I detected myself thinking of the snows of the north: and winter, "all unlovely as it was," proved, from the association of ideas, to me a season of enjoyment.

Whatever was to be the event of my



plans, my mother's, at least, seemed in a way to be slowly successful. My uncle invited me several times to dine with her at his house; and although I had no great cause to be flattered by my reception there, for he still continued to show me very little distinction or regard, I was, on the whole, better pleased with this sort of conduct, than if he had conceived a strong personal liking for me. I did not, in fact, believe he had any; though his indulgence towards his sister induced him to put a constraint on himself: but I was, nevertheless, a little staggered when I learnt, from a mutual friend on whose veracity I could rely, that, however cold his manners were to me when present, he had spoken of me, when absent, in such terms as hardly any but a father would have used. I began myself to suspect that a gleam of sunshine was likely to burst remotely upon my path; and though I could not altogether shape my expectations

expectations into any form wholly gratifying. I felt the burthen I had imposed upon myself become daily less heavy.

Mine, grievous as it seemed to me, was, nevertheless, far short of what I continually saw fall on others. Among those whom the concerns of business threw in my way, was a young Frenchman of the name of Vaudreuil. He had been recommended by an eminent house at Rouen, and was engaged for the foreign department in ours. His talents for business seemed to be moderate, but his industry and application were unequalled; so was his temperance. He lived on air: never tasted wine, nor shared in any conviviality whatever. Contrary to the general character of his countrymen, he was serious in the extreme. His manners were thought proud; and, as he was known to be poor, he was of consequence little liked by those with whom he was in some degree obliged

to associate. I had, for Claudina's sake, a slight partiality for those of her country ; and I occasionally manifested it towards him. It was increased when I found he had been dispatched from Rouen to St. Petersburg before he was sent over to England, and had seen Claudina herself. It was not at all probable that his condition in life should have allowed him to mingle in her circle ; but I, nevertheless, took pleasure in talking with one who had even seen her only. I found him extremely agreeable when I came to converse with him ; and I suspected that he had not been always a man of business. This, however, was a confession I never could extort from him ; and his reserve naturally created the same sentiment on my part. Once the extreme narrowness of his circumstances obliged him to have recourse to me for a pecuniary assistance ; and I could see the excessive pride of his soul by the tears it forced into his



his eyes. As this event, however, did not seem to increase his confidence in me, it naturally threw a still greater check upon every attempt I might have been inclined to make towards acquiring it.—I think we esteemed each other more than before; yet a sort of coldness grew up between us—the natural consequence of a feeling which, by some opposing principle, is not permitted to act with the force it demands. One more powerful, and even torturing, was awakened in my bosom by a very simple accident, and it related to Vaudreuil.

We had engaged to go into the country together on a particular day, as much to satisfy ourselves on a point of curiosity as pleasure.—I had promised to call upon him. He was not quite dressed, and I went into his room. While conversing with him there, I happened to cast my eyes upon a black ribbon  
which



which was at his bosom ;—it seemed to me as if a picture ought to depend from it, and I was seized with a singular fit of curiosity to ascertain whether there was one or not. I kept my attention earnestly directed towards the ribbon, and at length was gratified. I saw it was, indeed, a picture, but my heart suddenly bounded, and my pulse throbbed, for I believed it to be that of Claudina.—I had now the eye of an Argus, and I had more than one accidental opportunity of reconnoitring the portrait. It was, beyond doubt, either that of Claudina, or of some person strongly resembling her.—In a broken and irresolute tone I strove to rally Vaudreuil on the subject. He made no answer, but he sighed deeply, thrust the picture into his bosom, and buttoned it up there. I had now room for meditation more gloomy than any I had ever yet indulged. I recollected all the hazards that attended my engagement  
with

with Claudina, and the indirect release I had proffered her when we parted. How could I be assured that she had not availed herself of it? Vaudreuil might be nobly born and highly bred. I saw nothing against this supposition. He had been to Petersburg. He might, for aught I knew, be the most intimate friend of St. Victoire, and in his eyes, therefore, however poor, not exceptionable as the husband of his sister. Claudina's country, her habits of thinking, time, distance, and the influence of her brother, might have wrought a change in her affections; and while I was waiting the slow aid of the future to assure my happiness, the past might already have undermined it.—While I think of the tragical moments I endured in consequence of all these conjectures, I cannot help admiring how ingenious man is in tormenting himself, and how much a little

common

common sense would on certain occasions befriend him.

As our party was composed of several persons, it was not possible for me, throughout any part of that day, to bring Vaudreuil to such conversation as might enlighten my doubts. I passed, therefore, the most anxious and miserable of nights, one half of which was spent in writing to St. Petersburg; and I arose almost with the dawn, determined to satisfy myself on the subject which agitated me. Alert as I was, Vaudreuil seemed no less so; for at a very early hour in the morning I received a note from him, expressed singularly well, but with a tone of depression, that, in spite of the suspicions which haunted me, excited the deepest interest in his fate. It contained a request for a small sum of money, and an urgent intreaty that it might, if possible, be

be sent by the bearer.—Vaudrenil had acquitted himself of his former obligation to me in a manner highly honourable to his feelings, though in reality grievous to mine: for I was sure that nothing but the most painfully rigid economy could have enabled him to do so. Yet what he would not acknowledge, delicacy forbade me to wring from him: and I had, therefore, contented myself with obliging him by every indirect method I could possibly devise. Though he did not notice this, I had seen, on many occasions, that it sunk deeply into his soul, and I believed it had rendered him even more reluctant to demand any service from me. I had no doubt that something critical had occurred that induced this application, and I, therefore, without inquiry or hesitation, sent him a larger sum than that he requested, reserving my explanation with him to a late hour of the day, when I hoped the exigency



exigency that had thus suddenly occurred would be settled.

I found the time insupportably long in the interim. It did not at all surprise me that Vaudreuil failed to appear to execute his usual daily employment; but I was thunderstruck on being informed that he had thrown it up.—This, however, was not altogether true. He had, indeed, stated to his employers that it would not be possible for him to attend during a period, the extent of which he could not decide: but it was by no means clear, from the tenor of his letter, that he would return to it no more.—I flew to his lodgings: but I there learnt only a confirmation of my chagrin; for he had discharged them the moment he received the money from me; and the persons of the house could give me no other account of him than that he walked towards the city to find out some public convey-

conveyance by which he might leave London.

Had I been sure Claudina was his companion, I think I could hardly have been more enraged. In the first transports of my surprise and indignation I at once concluded that he had seen me notice the picture; that he was perfectly aware of the interest I took in the original; and that he had basely practised upon my credulity, by making the supply I had sent him the means of extricating either her or himself, or both, from my resentment. Nothing, however, was less likely than any of these suppositions. Vaudreuil did not seem the man who would shrink from any person's resentment; much less take advantage either of generosity or credulity. It was improbable in the extreme that Claudina should be in England; and it was perfectly absurd to suppose that he had shipped himself  
off,

off, at an hour's notice, for Petersburg.— I was not without an inclination to ship myself off, nevertheless;—but I grew cooler as I continued to reflect. The picture, after all, might not be that of Claudina. Vaudreuil might have concerns that called him thus suddenly away, without any reference to love; and, above every thing, there was internal evidence in the style of his letter, and my knowledge of his character, that he would, under any circumstances, return.

My reason was tolerably satisfied; but the aching demand of my heart was not appeased. More events, however, are sometimes comprized within a few hours than at others pass in years. While I was thus racking my imagination on the subject of Claudina and Vaudreuil, my mother's patience, and her messenger's, had been wearied in seeking me. I was found at last; and I learnt,

learnt, not without a strong emotion of anxiety and surprise, that I had been sent for to my uncle, who was taken with an apoplectic fit. I hastened immediately to his house, where I found my mother, by whom I was informed that every effort to recover him had been fruitless.—As he had never been sensible from the moment she saw him, she had had no opportunity of strengthening his good will towards me; or of influencing him in the disposal of his worldly affairs by the sight of her own tenderness and grief. All her highly cherished hopes, therefore, were suddenly blighted; and, in addition to a very afflicting calamity, she had a disappointment to encounter for which she was wholly unprepared.—That I felt was very small.—I had never relied on my uncle, and had been, in fact, more afraid of his entangling me by some half kindness, that would have rendered him the arbiter of my actions, than sanguine



in my expectations from his generosity. My mother knew, however, that she should in some degree benefit by his will (though resentment towards my father had excluded me from so doing;) and we were accordingly present when it was opened.

The first thing that excited our attention and surprise was the date, which was more recent than we expected. Being a bachelor, he had no immediate relatives, ourselves excepted, on whom to bestow his wealth. He gave a considerable number of legacies, however, to many of his friends; he settled a large portion of his personal fortune on my mother:—but both she and I looked at each other with astonishment, when we found the residue was allotted to me. This residue included a commercial property to some extent, together with an estate which he had purchased in his native country, Lanerkshire. Never shall I forget the look  
my

mother gave me :—it was so sweet an approbation of the sacrifices she believed I had made to moderation and to her tranquillity :—it conveyed to my soul so tender an assurance, that she was persuaded I owed to my own self-government the good fortune I had thus unexpectedly encountered, that it was more flattering to me than if I had received the wealth of the world. On her side, I believe, the acquisition of half of it would have been less delightful than that of her “ simple native vale.”—The romantic falls of the Clyde had been the scene of her earliest and tenderest recollections ; it was in that neighbourhood, too, I was born ; and the spot was endeared by a variety of nameless local charms, congenial to the most insensible bosom, and peculiarly so to those of my country. I also was not without my little hoard of hopes and recollections ; but they were somewhat damped by the vague doubt

I had lately cherished with regard to Claudina. My mother easily discerned I had something struggling in my mind beyond even those emotions naturally excited by the occasion.—She had long entertained a surmise that I had some attachment ; but she naturally concluded that it was subdued by prudence, and, therefore, waited tranquilly till the impulse of my own heart should induce me to confide it to her. This was not the moment to do so. I could not prevail on myself to let her see that I doubted the fidelity of Claudina ; and, in truth, the circumstance on which I founded my doubt, however perplexing to the imagination of a lover, was in itself so puerile and uncertain, that I knew not how to reveal it.

I waited impatiently the return of Vaudreuil ; for I was persuaded that he would return, or that I should at least hear from him,

him, though it were only in discharge of the pecuniary obligation between us ; and I was necessarily obliged to employ myself, in the interim, in the regulation of my uncle's concerns. I did this with the more alacrity, as it was my intention, the moment they were in any safe train, to embark for Petersburg, bear the news of my own change of fortune to Claudina, decide by her looks and her reception of me upon the interest I still held in her heart, and, if I found that unchanged, prevail with her to withdraw, either openly or in secret, from the authority of St. Victoire, and accompany me to England as my wife.—A long and cruel fortnight passed, however, without any tidings of Vaudreuil. During that period I could hardly forbear smiling, at intervals, to see those who now called themselves my friends imputing the indifference and half melancholy which hung about me to a hypocritical sorrow



for my uncle's death. I believe I was looked upon by these men of the world as a complete dissembler; and so far were they from calculating what passed in my heart, that I have no doubt they thought me secretly overwhelmed with exultation and joy.

I had been so indefatigable in my exertions, as soon to prepare every thing for my approaching departure. I meditated in what manner I should, without saying too much, communicate to my mother the nature of the business that carried me abroad; and I was walking, deeply engrossed with my own reflections, along the Strand, when, happening to cast my eyes upon a hackney-coach that passed me, I saw Vaudreuil in it. It was driving very fast; and beyond my reach, before I had recollection to stop it.—I could entertain no doubt, however, that it was him, for he bowed to me smilingly as  
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he passed. His countenance was more lighted up; and, from the glance I caught of him, I thought he seemed better dressed, than usual.

This was a mystery, the unravelling of which at once engaged all my attention. That Vaudreuil should be in London, should know himself to be my debtor, yet neither write nor call upon me; should be aware that he stood exposed to the most degrading suspicion, yet coolly bow to me from a hackney-coach, seemed almost beyond belief. I went to his former lodgings; but he had not been heard of there. I then hastened to the counting-house where he had been used to attend, but no tidings of his return had reached any of the clerks. A letter, however, was put into my charge, addressed to him, that had been sent thither by the people with whom he had lived. I knew it instantly to be the hand-writing of

Claudina, and I could, therefore, no longer doubt it to be her picture which he wore. —All my suspicions again recurred. I was on the point of tearing open the letter, in order to satisfy them :—but I remembered I had no claim over Vaudreuil, but one I should have blushed to profit by ; and that, if he had even robbed me of Claudina's affections, it was sufficiently probable that he never knew I had engaged them. No other acquittal but that of the petty money concern between us was, in the apparent state of the business, necessary on his part ; and such was the confidence inspired by the kind of character I had observed in him, that I was still persuaded, if there was any thing treacherous in his conduct, he would at length appear to answer it. The letter had no ship-mark : I examined that of the post ; it was from Hull.—My voyage to Petersburg would then be fruitless.—Claudina was evidently not there.—The appearance

pearance of Vaudreuil would be, perhaps, alike useless to me. She would probably have bestowed herself upon him before we met ;—for, if there was no deceitful motive in her voyage, why did she not write to me ? I had not even heard from her for a considerable time before. But this circumstance I had hitherto imputed to some accidental failure of her letters : that before me announced a different reason for her silence ; and I had the torture of supposing she was at that very moment in London, yet as far out of the reach of my penetration as if in the wilds of Siberia. I returned home extremely melancholy ; and, to my great surprise, found waiting for me there the very person I had been over half the town in search of—in other words, Vaudreuil himself. In my hand I held Claudina's letter, which I had taken possession of, leaving word where it was to be found ; and I advanced towards him



him with a turbulence and impatience of which he did not seem at all sensible. His countenance was, indeed, as it had appeared to me in the coach, animated and cheerful: in a word, he looked happy, and that was enough to make me miserable.

“I come,” said he, stepping towards me, “to demand your congratulations, and to announce a piece of good fortune in which you will sympathize with me.”

“Spare yourself the relation,” said I fullenly—“I know the good fortune that has befallen you without its being told. You are married—or on the point of being so.—And, to show you that I am better informed of your affairs than you suppose, I can even name the faithless woman who has bestowed herself upon you.”

“When I do marry,” said Vaudreuil, laugh-

laughing, "I hope it will not be a faithless woman, at least.—You are, in truth, a most ingenious guesser : and after you have pointed out the fair one who means to do me the favour of bestowing herself upon me, I shall know what portion of gratitude is due both to you and to her. In the interim, however, assure yourself that it is not matrimony, but that which has of late engrossed a much greater share of the thoughts of mankind, politics—which is in question with me.—I have received undoubted information that the new government in France will allow me to recover at least a considerable portion of my family claims and property there. I have never borne arms against my country ; and should I prove successful in my application, I shall be enabled to serve a brother who is less fortunately circumstanced, and a sister inexpressibly dear to me."

"You

“ You have a sifter ! ” exclaimed I.

“ Undoubtedly I have,” returned Vaudreuil, smiling archly:

“ And you wear her picture ”—

—“ At my bosom ! ” and he drew it from thence.

“ Ah, it is Claudina !—*my* Claudina—*my own* Claudina,” cried I, snatching and kissing it rapturously a thousand times. Vaudreuil could not forbear smiling at an étourderie so foreign to all he had yet seen of my character.

“ I am ignorant how soon she is to be your Claudina,” said he at length, gently disengaging the portrait ; “ but I know she is at present mine ; and I am not quite assured that she will permit me to authorise  
such

such violent careffes.—Let us be seated, my kind friend," he added, recovering his usual interesting gravity of tone and manner; "and if you can command these transports of yours,—so little in unison with our ideas of English phlegm,—I will tell you, what I am sure you will have real pleasure in hearing—I will tell you that your generous interposition rescued Claudina and both her brothers from a state of half-despondency; that your pecuniary kindness supplied with necessaries and comforts the proud spirit and suffering frame of St. Victoire:—finally, that it has afforded Claudina herself the means of coming up to London, and of thanking you in person.—These, believe me, are not dreams," said he, perceiving me stare with astonishment: "it is but very lately that I have known the history of my own family: such as it is I will relate it to you.—I need not tell you that I am much younger than St.

Victoire—



Victoire—there is, in fact, only the difference of two years between Claudina and myself:—but I look older—for I have suffered,”—he added, sighing. “From the time I had any use of reason, it unfortunately happened that mine did not accord with that of my family—I was, therefore, an early outcast from it, and remained in France, when my relations quitted it, without their deigning to take the smallest interest in my after fate. My name was prohibited to Claudina’s lips, as attaching disgrace to her own; and it was the constant habit of suppressing it that probably prevented its reaching your ears. I was not much more fortunate, however, in my political career than my father and my brother had been. The fickle and too enthusiastic nation of which I was an individual became sanguinary, and disgraced the noblest aim of humanity. I was nearly a victim to the guillotine; but a friendly banker at

Paris

Paris concealed me, and by his assistance I passed in safety to Rouen. I was not without abilities, and am among those of my countrymen who think it no disgrace to use them. I applied myself under a borrowed name to business: but I did not find that I was wholly safe from persecution, and was, therefore, advised to quit France. My heart fondly turned towards St. Petersburg, where I believed I should find my mother, my brother, and my sister. As I was now rather more unfortunate than themselves, I conceived that my offences would be expiated in their eyes; and I accordingly embarked. I soon found that I had had the misfortune to lose one of the three, without being happy enough to recover the other two; for my reception from St. Victoire was neither brotherly nor generous. It was indeed such as determined me to meet him no more; for I was not without some share of the family pride when it was roused.

roufed. I faw Claudina accidentally for a quarter of an hour, but he would not permit me to converfe with her freely. I wrote to her, however; and I requested from her my mother's picture, as a memorial of my family. She did not poffefs it; but ſhe ſent me her own, together with an earneſt intreaty to ſee me again. No doubt ſhe thought me very unkind; for I was ſo circumſtanced that I could not enter the liſts with St. Victoire on that ſubject, and he eluded my addreſs when I attempted to ſend her another letter. I, therefore, quitted St. Peterſburg without having an opportunity of vindicating my ſentiments to her, and came over to England; where, by the continued aſſiſtance of my worthy friends at Rouen, I obtained the employment in the courſe of which I was fortunate enough to meet with you.—Ah! your generous heart, my dear friend,” ſaid he, preſſing my hand, “has ſympathiſed with mine during this narration!—

narration! — May it be thus that good actions ever come home to the bosom of him who performs them! — You respected the innocent tenderness of Claudina, and that tenderness will, I hope, henceforward be unremittingly exercised to reward you! — You extended your philanthropy and good offices to a foreigner whom your countrymen did not always treat with the indulgence due to the unfortunate: — you have gained by it a friend, who will, to the latest hour of his life, be the friend of Englishmen, and the protector of those of any country to whom protection is necessary.”

Vaudreuil spoke this with an energy and seriousness that was extremely affecting: or else its being my own panegyric caused it extremely to affect me. He spoke English tolerably; but on this occasion he expressed himself throughout in French: and I know not how it happens, but my



translation seems to have lost all the fire and spirit of the original. Nothing now appeared necessary towards my felicity but to see Claudina. I told him as much; and at the same moment, recollecting the letter of hers I still possessed, I offered it to him. —“I have conversed with her since it was written,” said he, putting it in his pocket; “and, therefore, know its contents.—St. Victoire is at this moment extremely fatigued, and in no condition to receive you. Claudina, who has not been many hours in town after a most rapid journey, will herself be the better for a short repose; and as she cannot calculate that I should meet with you so soon, she will probably find it. You do not yet know by what means I became possessed of your secret. Have you no curiosity?—or are you so inhospitable that you are already solicitous to get rid of me?”

Vaudreuil was not wrong in his surmise.

I could

I could with great pleasure have taken him by the arm, and led him out of my house towards that in which I should find his sister. I had not the least curiosity to know how he became acquainted with my *secret*, as he called it. It appeared to me that the story would have done equally well at any time: and, in plain terms, that he could not have found one more *mal à propos* for telling it than that present; but I had my measures to keep. Vaudreuil had generously humbled both himself and his family too much before me, to allow me any liberty of action where they were concerned. I had, therefore, nothing for it but patience: and I endeavoured to collect myself to a decent attention. I was restless, however, at first: but the subject was still Claudina and her brothers;—it therefore again insensibly interested and tranquillised me.

“I had not been long in England,” said Vaudreuil,” before I wrote to St. Victoire. We had parted from each other in high displeasure: but when I recollected that it might be perhaps for the last time, I could not resolve to leave him and Claudina without any traces of me; or myself without a place in the remembrance of either. I thought it vain, however, to write to her; as he would, doubtless, again suppress my letter. Without being circumstantial, I gave him to understand that, on my arrival in England, I had fallen upon a plan by which I might secure myself from the horrors of penury. To say truth, I was afraid of explaining the nature of my employment, lest I should irreparably offend his aristocratical ideas; but I made it plain that I solicited nothing from him but brotherly good wishes and regard. I exhorted him to allow Claudina at least sometimes to write to me, and gave him my address for that purpose. I received

received no answer to this letter: as indeed I hardly expected I should. A considerable time past away, every hour of which added to my melancholy, as I began to believe that I was fated to be always an alien from my family connections; when, on the evening, or rather night, of that day on which you and I had been in the country together, I returned late to my lodgings, and, to my surprise, found a letter lying there for me, directed in a female hand. It was from Claudina, who wrote, at the desire of St. Victoire, to request my protection and assistance. They had landed together from a Russian merchantman at the port of Hull; driven abruptly from Petersburg by the indiscretion of St. Victoire. Claudina will give you the particulars of his quarrel with a Russian officer of distinction. They had a meeting in consequence of it, when both were wounded: the Russian severely. My brother, not-



withstanding his own suffering, was put under confinement; and death or exile to Siberia seemed the punishment that awaited him. The recovery of his antagonist, however, and an interest he had the address to create for himself in the heart of a female favourite, mitigated his sentence. He was commanded to quit the Russian territories within a limited time, and to return thither no more under pain of death. The period allowed him to prepare for his departure was extremely short: his sickness, together with his extravagance, had left him totally unprovided with money, nor could his friend the Marquis de S—— assist him; for he had been himself obliged to withdraw from St. Petersburg some little time before; and his wife, from distress of circumstances, had retired to her father, the Duc de C——. In this exigency, without assistants, advisers, or friends, St. Victoire and Claudina could think of no  
better

Better plan than that of coming over to England, and throwing themselves upon me—Me!—whose miserable and impoverished state you are so well acquainted with!—The calculation they formed of it was, however, very different from the truth. In writing to St. Victoire, I had forborne to draw it in its worst colours, both for the reasons I have before given you, and the fear lest he should suspect me of wanting any pecuniary service from him. This delicacy on my part was the source of their error: they embarked full of chimerical hopes. Claudina has since told me, that, although she dared not hint as much to St. Victoire, there was yet another heart in your island on which she relied even more entirely than on mine—how justly, I have since had ample occasion to prove!—Their passage was rough. My brother's wound, which had been too hastily closed, opened again;

but for Claudina's knowledge of English they would have been totally helpless; and such was altogether their situation soon after they landed, that no resource remained but to write to me, and exhort me to come and extricate them from it. Alas ! I had no means to do so ; and Claudina's letter was, therefore, a stab to my heart. At the moment I received it I neither possessed a single guinea, nor the means of raising one. You were the only human being to whom I had ever applied on a similar occasion, and I now ventured to throw myself a second time upon you. By an effort better suited to the liberality of your mind than to your circumstances, you sent me a more considerable sum than I had requested. I travelled night and day to reach Hull, and fortunately arrived there sooner than I had been expected; when I immediately called in proper assistance to St. Victoire, who was sufficiently altered both

in

in constitution and manners to excite my tenderest sympathy. As to dear Claudina, she and I had soon cause to regret that we had not earlier understood each other's heart. Nothing could be more delightful than this first intercourse between two beings so nearly allied in blood, yet hitherto strangers. Your conversation and habits of thinking had enlightened her mind too much to allow of her cherishing the prejudices which had originally disunited me from my family ; and I was no less delighted with the cultivation of her judgment than with the charms of her person. I told her exactly my own situation ; and, without precisely naming you, described the generous friend whose assistance had enabled me to undertake my journey. Claudina, on her part, was not less frank. She related to me all the secrets of her heart, and bespoke an interest in mine for the man she loved. Imagine our mutual surprise—our lively  
and



and exquisite pleasure, when we found that we had in reality been talking of one and the same person!—There was nothing after this discovery so much the wish of either as to reach London with all possible dispatch. Claudina had already written a long letter to you, in order to account, by a relation of the late events that had befallen St. Victoire, for a silence that had exceeded her usual limits. At my desire she suppressed this letter. I hardly entertained a doubt but on the receipt of it you would have come to us at the hazard probably of great inconvenience to yourself; and, to speak frankly, I also promised my own heart an indescribable satisfaction in being the first to announce to you those delightful sensations in which I was certain you would sympathise. Claudina did not, I assure you, make the sacrifice I demanded of her without some regret: but she did make it: and the rather, as we had reason

to

to suppose St. Victoire's health would amend rapidly enough to allow of our setting off without much delay. In fact you will perceive by the time of my absence that we made all possible speed. Our circumstances, nevertheless, did not allow us to choose the most commodious method of travelling, and my brother is of consequence ill and exhausted. My first business was, indeed by Claudina's express desire, to seek you: nor was there more than one interest in the world that could have detained me in the pursuit of you. It was precisely that, however, which happened to occur. I met on the way one of my countrymen, from whom I learnt some particulars relative to France which I had long most anxiously waited to hear. He referred me for further authentic details to another mutual friend, who was that very morning to set out on his return thither. Not a single moment was to be lost. I  
drove

drove with all the rapidity I could command to the lodgings of the latter, and was fortunate enough to meet with him. As the situation of our affairs was in all respects alike, the account he gave me of his, left me no reason to doubt the event of my own representations at Paris. I entrusted to him a memorial and other papers I had long since prepared against a similar occasion, and I rely so much both on his zeal, and the justice of my cause, as to assure myself that I shall quickly obtain the proper passports and security. If, in addition to this, I should be happy enough to recover my family property, how joyfully shall I share my affluence with the man who was the friend of my poverty !”

Vaudreuil had spoken so long, that I really began to apprehend he never intended to conclude. He was no talker in general, and therefore I wondered the  
more

more at him. But his heart was full of his subject, as I could see in his eyes, and I believe he felt an absolute necessity for thus pouring it out. In spite of my impatience I had not failed, however, at intervals, to be both flattered and touched by his recital: and under any other circumstances no gratification would have been greater perhaps than that of listening to it. I had just then, however, a much greater in view, and I, therefore, hurried him away. I had gathered from the conclusion of his discourse that he was yet ignorant of my uncle's death, and the change it had occasioned in my worldly concerns. This was not surprising; since that I should have become, during his absence, either a guest or even a constant resident in my uncle's house, was among the occurrences of life that might naturally happen. It was now time to explain my situation to him. I could see that he was much struck with it,

and



and felt as though Claudina and himself were suddenly rendered bankrupts both in fortune and in love. But the native dignity and candour of his mind made him quickly recover from the surprise, and he rejoiced in my prosperity.

“Poor St. Victoire!” said he, smiling, as we entered his lodgings: “his pride will not even have the consolation of believing that he is going to take an impoverished man to his bosom!—I was far from being sure that St. Victoire’s pride was of so generous a nature: on the contrary I was strongly inclined to suspect that my affluence would be the only consoling circumstance to him under the mortification of having me for a brother-in-law. I made no comment, however, on Vaudreuil’s speech; nor indeed had I time. Claudina was before my eyes—she was in my arms: more lovely, as it appeared to me, than ever: for that pure pleasure

ture which springs immediately from the heart embellished her features; her person was in reality improved.—She was grown taller:—her figure, without losing its slowness, was more formed: and she had a decided character of countenance. A scene of the most unalloyed transport succeeded, and it was not immediately that I could recollect myself enough to think at all of St. Victoire. When I did, I was not unmoved by his paleness and apparent depression. His arm was still in bandages, and the loss of blood which he had sustained had altered him very considerably. The ground between us had been rendered perfectly smooth by the kind offices of his brother and sister. We therefore saluted each other with some degree of cordiality; and both studiously avoided all reference to the past. As the house I had lately come into possession of was spacious, I earnestly intreated the whole family to take up their  
abode

abode there : and this was the more necessary, as the situation of the invalid demanded comforts and an attention he could not so well receive elsewhere.

“ It seems only a question whether we shall live with you, or on you, my good friend,” said Vaudreuil, perceiving my proposal had given birth to some scruples :—  
“ for my part I think it is very clear which we ought, for our own gratification, to choose.” To this decision Claudina and St. Victoire, without much difficulty, acceded. I staid several hours with them, and then returned home, to give my mother notice of the visitors she was so soon to receive. Her surprise was at first very great. She questioned me abundantly concerning Claudina; and I could easily discover that she secretly regretted my not having chosen an Englishwoman: though, even in that case, I felt that one  
of

of her own country would have been still preferable in her eyes ; but she was too indulgent and too deeply interested in my happiness to raise any obstacles to my present plans, and on my part I was persuaded that she had only to see the woman I had chosen in order to be convinced no other was so well worthy to be my choice.

Before evening every thing was in readiness to receive our guests. My mother herself accompanied me at a very early hour to fetch the lovely Claudina to that home of which she was soon to become the mistress. My uncle's carriage, as he had been old and infirm, was a conveyance perfectly convenient to St. Victoire, and he arrived at my door without much fatigue.

“ It is the fate of our family to be overwhelmed with your bounties, Monsieur,”



said he, as I gave him my arm to mount the stairs.—I thought it was said proudly too. He was sufficiently a man of the world, however, not to overlook that portion of its goods with which I was surrounded. I saw him eye the apartment we sat in, which had been indeed somewhat expensively furnished by my uncle, and I could fancy I heard him say to himself—“Humph! This then is the house of an English merchant!”—Vaudreuil and Claudina, on the contrary, saw not a mirror or a carpet it contained. That dear girl’s spirits soon rose in sympathy with mine, and we became a pair of the most giddy, laughing lovers that can easily be imagined. To look at us, indeed, any body would have supposed we had never known a sorrow or a care: and Vaudreuil, who had hitherto seen nothing in his sister but a pretty pensive young woman, or in me but a sombre man of business, was perfectly astonished at the metamorphosis in  
both

both. We quickly seduced him, in spite of his habitual seriousness, into a participation of our mirth. And St. Victoire himself, though a little starched at first, yet, before the evening closed, forgot his indisposition, his pride, and his prejudices, and condescended to have more than one hearty laugh along with us. I was very sorry when the hour of parting and repose came. Nevertheless I slept soundly, for I was certain of seeing Claudina again in the morning ; and, in return, she has since assured me she never had a more delightful slumber than that she enjoyed under the protection of my roof.

I had judged rightly with respect to my mother : she felt herself the happiest of creatures on being thus suddenly embosomed in a youthful circle, each individual of which looked up for her approving smile to sanction their own. The inge-

nuousness, the youthful gaiety, the sweet playfulness of Claudina's character and manners, completely won her affections, and she soon lived in her sight nearly as much as I did: nor did the former fail to cultivate this tender regard by every office of duty and attention on her part.

Our first business was to make a little establishment for St. Victoire that should ensure the recovery of his health, and then to forward those measures that promised to be favourable for Vaudreuil. We were successful in both instances. The applications made by the latter were approved by the men in power of his own country, and he had very soon the satisfaction of learning that he might return thither without danger—to say the least: but, in fact, he had every reason to believe that he should be reinstated in great part of his rights. This was certainly no music to the

the

the ears of St. Victoire : nevertheless it was better than that the whole family should be proscribed ; and the generous character of his brother left the Count no cause to doubt but he would derive his share of advantage from the return of the former to France. Nice as this business was to settle, Vaudreuil and I contrived to arrange it between us. For, in spite of his political opinions, he was not without a delicate but strong repugnance to the dispossessing an elder branch of the family of his rights in life. As to Claudina, she was out of the question. I was rich enough for both, and I, therefore, lent no ear to any thing that could be said on that subject. She was now, alas ! not so ignorant of the real sufferings of poverty as she had been ; and this knowledge, which I had at one time so deprecated and earnestly endeavoured to shield her from, became in the end an affecting monitor that taught her to



feel for others when she ceased to have any thing to feel or fear on that head for herself.

My mourning for my uncle obliged me to postpone my marriage for a short time: it would indeed have been postponed still longer but for the necessity of Vaudreuil's return to France. Both Claudina and myself were solicitous that our union should be sanctioned by the presence of that tender and amiable brother whom we were so soon to lose. How sincerely did we all lament that the tide of human affairs should separate beings united by every principle of affection or intellect!—How gloomy was the consideration that the human race at large, accustomed to blood, should forget in mutual animosity that sacred tie common to all!—Surely it is for the liberal-minded and humane of every nation to counteract the destructive influence of general

heral prejudice, by extending and strengthening, in their private habits, those social feelings which bid man acknowledge his fellow-creature in every quarter of the globe.

On the day preceding that fixed for Vaudreuil's departure, Claudina and I were united. St. Victoire himself bestowed her upon me. I should have been better pleased to have owed the gift, dear as it was, to his brother: but Vaudreuil and I understood each other, and that was enough. A most sorrowful parting succeeded: but it has been the only real chagrin that has clouded my life since my marriage. There are heretics who will smile at this sentence. To such I answer, that I have not yet been married many years; and even if I had—but they will smile again!—There is no curing these sort of people!

My

My mother, good woman, often looks at us, and observes "that marriages are (according to the old proverb) certainly made in Heaven." So also say I! but she, in the simplicity of her heart, draws her conclusions from the extraordinary circumstance that occasioned our meeting; I, mine, from the still more extraordinary one of our desiring never to part!

St. Victoire has entirely recovered the ill consequences of his wound, and lives at no great distance from us on a pension remitted him by his brother, who has retrieved great part of the family fortune. The former has not yet, however, forgotten his passion for noblesse, and is a little inclined to drop my acquaintance if we happen suddenly to encounter each other in Bond-Street or Pall-Mall. I forgive him: for he keeps the first company,

pany, and is a fine man. Vaudreuil's circle is smaller, and he, I am assured, is a very happy one. His happiness, indeed, as well as mine, is of that tranquil nature at which men of the world will wonder. Be it so ! I neither envy them their inflamed passions nor sophisticated tastes.

As leisure has served, Claudina, and myself, in company with my mother, have more than once visited our little native spot on the banks of the Clyde ; when, in the enjoyment of rural beauty there, we do not fail to commemorate the worthy pastor, our kind and first friend, we talk of his flowers—his bees—and *his sun*. We mutually agree that none ever shone so brightly to our eyes before. We have long since established a correspondence with the good old man, continued by small but grateful offerings on our part ;  
and



and we sometimes even amuse ourselves with chimerical projects, of presenting to his eyes those fragile but interesting human blossoms, which alone could to us embellish his garden, as they form the chief charm of our own.

FINIS.

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S. HAMILTON, PRINTER,  
FALCON-COURT, FLEET-STREET, LONDON.

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## ERRATA.

Page 18, line 17, for *isolated* read *insulated*.

63, — 8, for *the Austrian yoke almost unanimously rejected*, read *the almost unanimous rejection of the Austrian yoke*.

Page 329, last line, for *endowments* read *advantages*;

331, line 16, for *endowment* read *distinction*,

361, — 5, for *hopeless* read *incapable*.

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